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ABSTRACT

This book presents five papers that address a variety of issues confronting those who work directly with young children and their teachers. The first three articles present ways of thinking about what constitutes professionalism in working with children and parents. Specifically, "Contemporary Perspectives on the Roles of Mothers and Teachers" examines the distinctions between the orientations of mothers and teachers toward children and points out ways in which both orientations play an essential role in children's growth and development; "The Professional Preschool Teacher" aims to distinguish professional behavior from both nonprofessional and unprofessional behavior by illustrating types of responses to a dispute between two preschoolers over a tricycle; and "Ethical Issues in Working with Young Children" examines ethical problems specific to the field and analyzes the teacher's relationship with parents and colleagues. The fourth paper, "Assessing the Development of Preschoolers," proposes 11 dimensions useful in determining an individual child's development at a particular time on the basis of everyday behaviors that indicate natural fluctuations in growth. The last paper, "Helping Others with Their Teaching," proposes ideas to help supervisors of teachers and teacher educators decide how they can best encourage the mastery of professional skills in the teachers and student teachers with whom they work. (CB)

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Lilian G. Katz

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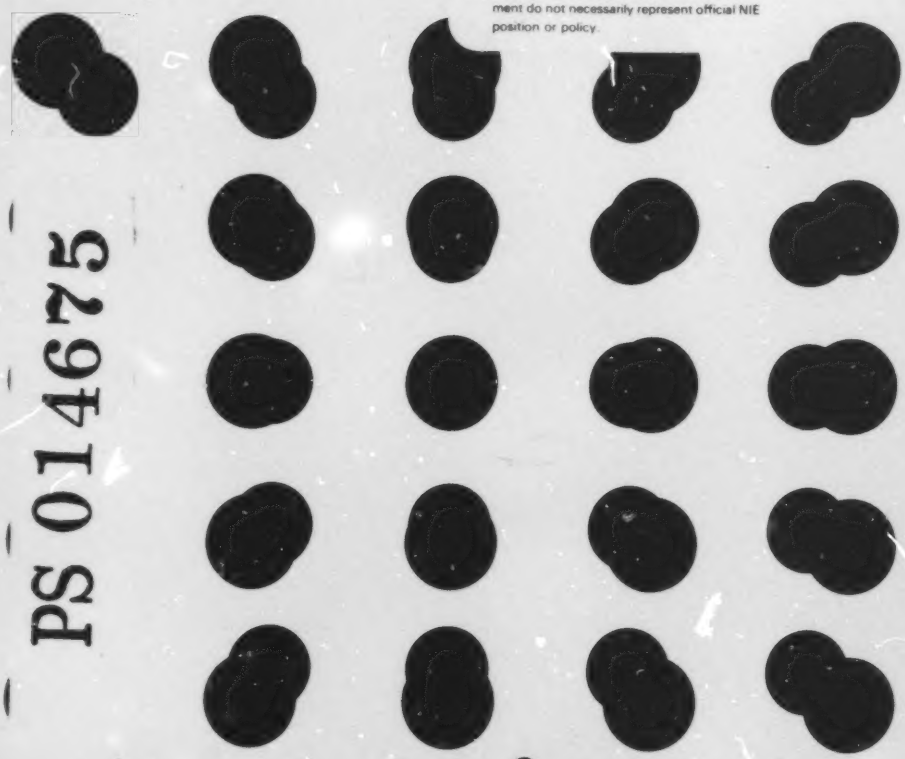

More Talks with Teachers

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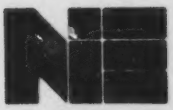

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FOREWORD

The Educational Resources Information Center/Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE) is one part of a network of 16 specialized clearinghouses funded by the National Institute of Education to provide information about current research and developments in the field of education. Each clearinghouse focuses on a specific area of education (a complete of list of ERIC clearinghouses may be found at the back of this volume). ERIC/EECE is responsible for acquiring, abstracting, and indexing recent information on the social, psychological, physical, educational, and cultural development of children from the prenatal period through early adolescence. Theoretical and practical issues related to staff development, administration, curriculum, and parent/community factors affecting programs for children of this age group are also within the scope of the clearinghouse.

Each month, documents including research studies, conference proceedings, curriculum guides, program descriptions and evaluations, and other publications not readily available from other sources are abstracted and indexed in the pages of *Resources in Education (RIE)*. Through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, the ERIC system then makes available microfiche and paper copies of these documents. Articles from over 800 journals and magazines are indexed in ERIC's *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE);* many of the articles cited are annotated as well.

Each clearinghouse provides syntheses and analyses of that information in order to keep teachers, program administrators, researchers, and decision makers in all areas of education abreast of the most recent and important findings in their respective fields. In addition to publishing bibliographies and topical

papers of interest to those involved with the care, development, and education of young children, ERIC/EECE produces resource lists and newsletters on a regular basis. Clearinghouse staff members also respond to individual information requests.

PREFACE

In 1977, the National Association for the Education of Young Children published a book entitled *Talks with Teachers*. That volume was a collection of nine papers addressing a variety of issues confronting those who work directly with young children and their teachers. *More Talks with Teachers* collects five additional papers written in the 8-year period following publication of the first *Talks*. These most recent papers have, like their predecessors, emerged from my experiences with students, teachers, inservice educators, and professional colleagues—and they owe much to the ideas exchanged in discussion with these many people.

Some of the papers collected here have appeared previously in slightly different versions; others make their debut in this volume. In particular, the first three discussions set out ways of thinking about what constitutes professionalism in working with children and their parents. "Contemporary Perspectives on the Roles of Mothers and Teachers" examines the distinctions between the orientations of mothers and teachers toward children. "The Professional Preschool Teacher" aims to distinguish professional behavior from both nonprofessional and unprofessional responses by illustrating a teacher's response to a dispute between two preschoolers over a tricycle. Last in this group, "Ethical Issues in Working with Young Children" examines ethical problems specific to the field and offers discussion concerning the teacher's relationships with others in the professional setting.

The writing of the fourth paper in the collection, "Assessing the Development of Preschoolers," was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor Amita Vermer, the inspiring chairperson of the Department of Child Development of the University of

Baroda, India. Written in collaboration with the staff members of the Chetan Balwadi (laboratory nursery school) there, this discussion seeks to address the question, How can we tell whether an individual child's development is going well at a particular time? Rather than attempt to identify how the Balwadi children ranked on norms or scales, we selected those aspects of children's behavior that would indicate natural fluctuations in growth and development and that would alert us to those moments when our intervention might be required.

The last paper in the collection, "Helping Others with Their Teaching," originally emerged as a result of my working as a UNESCO consultant to the Ministry of Education of Barbados. The ideas initially proposed to help supervisors and teacher educators work with teachers were further refined while I was in the course of collaborating on Head Start's Enabler Model under the leadership of Dr. Jenni W. Klein in the Office of Child Development. Later refinements were made as a result of frequent discussions with my colleague at the University of Illinois, Professor James D. Raths.

All of the work collected in this book owes much to the helpfulness of the staff, as well as to the rich and readily available resources at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois.

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and Early Childhood Education

Contemporary Perspectives on the Roles of Mothers and Teachers

The problems facing American families have received widespread attention in recent years. Newspapers and magazines have capitalized on and perhaps contributed to a mounting sense of alarm over the imminent disappearance of "the family." The 1980 White House Conference on the Family was reported to have been the occasion of bitter factional disputes over fundamental views on the family and the extent to which public agencies can be expected to support beleaguered families and unconventional living arrangements.

Much of the talk in conferences, panel discussions, and reports in the media betrays a belief that in the "good old days" families were wonderful, warm, comfortable and benign—always ready to provide the young with a harmonious and affectionate environment in which to grow. It is of some interest to note that the nostalgia in such discussions occurs at a time when the literature on the history of childhood and family life has been growing very rapidly. The chances are that in the 1970s more has been written on the history of women, children, and families than in all the centuries before.

In general, the historical accounts of families and childhoods now available suggest that the "good old days" were awful—especially for children (Langer, 1974; Stone, 1975, 1977; Wishy, 1972). In the not-so-distant past, at least in the Western world, adults were enjoined to save children from certain damnation, to break their wills, and to engage in other forms of what we would now call child abuse, mostly of a psychological type (see

An earlier version of this paper appeared in 1980 in *Parenthood in a Changing Society*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Urbana, IL.

Wishy, 1972).[1] For the majority of children, the history of childhood suggests a record of almost uninterrupted hunger, disease, psychological and physical abuse, and other miseries. On the average, the quality of life for children is most likely much better, by absolute standards, than it has ever been before.

In the United States, we sometimes forget that it was not until 1938 that the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which protected children from unfair labor practices, occurred. It has been widely acknowleged that, even then, the Act was passed because children were occupying jobs badly needed by unemployed adults during the 1930s.

We often attribute our family and childrearing problems to change. Change has always been with us, and ideally it always will be. Perhaps the rate at which patterns change has accelerated so greatly that changes occur within generations rather than simply between them. Perhaps another source of upheaval is that changes affecting families and educators are not synchronized—some parts of our lives change faster than other parts. One of the most vivid examples of poor synchronization of changes is that of increasing numbers of young mothers entering the labor force without corresponding increases in the provision of sufficient extra-home child care facilities.

The widespread feelings of frustration reported by parents and educators of young children cannot be alleviated by romanticizing the past, which, it turns out, was nothing to shout about for most of our ancestors. Since we constantly change the standards by which we define the "good life," some sense of failure, of falling below our ideals, is always likely to stalk us.

A contemporary view of family life indicates that, although most children still live in families rather than institutions, specific arrangements are changing. Families are smaller, and more of them are headed by single parents. It may be helpful to keep in mind that the particular family arrangement a child grows up with is not as important to the child's psychosocial development as are the meanings he or she gives to that arrangement. Thus, for example, if one grows up without a father, to a large extent the signficance of such paternal deprivation will vary depending upon the meaning given to the deprivation. If the father is absent because he has gone off to war to save the country and preserve our freedom, the meaning of the absence will take a particular form. If nearly all the fathers of most peers

have also gone off to war, father absence may be a shared, ennobling hardship. Indeed, in such a case, father presence might be insufferable to youngsters at certain ages.

If, on the other hand, the deprivation is due to the father's desertion of the family, it may have a different meaning. If the father is in prison for a heinous crime, then again the absence will very likely take on another meaning. If all one's peers' fathers are present, the meaning of the absence of one's own may cause painful feelings. If the separation or divorce of parents—a frequent cause of father deprivation—alleviates preseparation disharmony and stress, father absence may take on a different meaning from that in other cases. The point is that deprivation itself cannot determine the outcome of a child's development, but the meaning the young child gives to that deprivation and the feelings those meanings engender may have significant effects on the child's personality development. One of the major responsibilities of caregivers is to help children to give appropriate meaning to their experiences.

We seem to be at a point in social history when parents have great responsibility (although not enough authority) for helping their children to develop personalities capable of early self-sufficiency and autonomy (LeVine, 1980), to acquire complex motivational patterns that will enable them to make long term occupational and career commitments, and to make choices from among a variety of possible lifestyles. Many of the stresses of parenting stem from the wide range of choices, alternatives, and options available to modern Americans in virtually every aspect of life. It is not difficult to imagine the reduction in arguments, heated discussions, and demanding behavior on the part of children that would follow from having to live with minimal choices in such things as food, television shows, toys, clothes, and so forth!

To some extent, parental stress is exacerbated by the shrinking size of the family. In times when families included seven or eight children, anxiety about growth and accomplishments could be spread over the group. If one or two did well, three or four got by, and the rest were not much to brag about, the parents might still have been able to walk in the neighborhood with their heads held up. Fifty years ago, the offspring at the bottom of the pile could be accounted for by their resemblance to an uncle or great aunt from a particular branch or "side of

the family." However, progress of social and behavioral science has heightened awareness of the centrality of parental influences on the outcome of development. Few today would buy the excuse of a "bad seed" occasionally showing up in descendants. A family with only one or two children may be putting too many eggs in the proverbial basket for it to carry safely.

Because the family is potentially the source of the greatest good, it is also, in equal proportion, potentially the source of the greatest damage. Ideally, the family is the major provider of support, warmth, comfort, protection, and so forth. But when the family falls short in these provisions, suffering can be acute, and disturbances in development may result.

It is unlikely that parents were more devoted to their children in bygone days than they are today. The task of parenting has become more complex, and the impact of parental failure more serious. It is important to note that in every social class there are many children whose psychological lives are destroyed by their families. I should add that some of those children may be saved by one or two teachers who give them support, recognition, and encouragement missing from other sources.

In fact, there is increasing pressure (often self-imposed) on teachers in day care centers, preschools, and primary classes to respond to the apparent needs of children assumed to be unmet by their busy, working, and, in many cases, single parents. At the same time, there is growing enthusiasm for parent training and parent involvement in schooling. Among the outcomes of research on young children is the welcome acknowledgment that parents' behavior plays a central role in their youngsters' intellectual development.

The influence of parents on their children's personalities has long been recognized, if not exaggerated. But recent research findings, exemplified by the well-known work of White, Kaban, and Attanucci (1979), Levenstein (1970), Schaefer (1979), and others are reflected in such catch phrases as "Parents are the child's first teacher" or even "best teacher." New optimism about the potential educational role of parents has given rise to numerous programs designed to help parents become more effective teachers of their young children. The objectives of many of these programs go beyond strengthening the specific parenting skills to include training in tutorial and instructional skills as well.

In summary, pressures seem to mount on mothers[2] to instruct their children in ways that will render them more responsive to schooling, perhaps in part due to a lack of confidence in teachers and schools and a sense of urgency in getting children started on the academic treadmill early. On the other hand, it is not unusual to hear teachers of young children complain that they must supply the nurturance and affection children seem to need before instruction can be effective. While mothers often believe that their children might better attain academic success if teachers were more competent, teachers often believe that their own efforts would be more successful if mothers only attended properly to their own children's psychosocial needs. So long as such recriminatory attitudes persist, parent-teacher relationships are unlikely to be characterized as opportunities for mutual support.

Dimensions of Distinction between Parents and Teachers

It is obvious that teachers do many of the same things with children that mothers do, and vice versa. It is in the nature of young children that from time to time they require of their teachers at school some of the same tending, caring, and guiding given them by their mothers at home. Similarly, mothers are helping their children to acquire knowledge and skills that teachers consider important. Although the behavior of the two role-takers is likely to overlap on each of the seven dimensions discussed below, the central tendencies of each can be expected to yield the distinctions indicated in the table provided. In the service of exploration, role distinctions between the two are somewhat exaggerated; no role-takers occur as the pure types described here. Furthermore, it should be understood that, although the dimensions on which the two role-takers are distinguished interact with each other, these dimensions are enumerated separately in order to highlight potential problems arising from confusion between the two roles.

Scope of functions. In a discussion of some of the discontinuities between families and schools, Getzels (1974) points out that the two institutions are discontinuous in at least two ways: specifically, in the scope and the affectivity characterizing relationships in the two settings.

Under the rubric of scope, Getzels points out that the functions to be fulfilled by the family are diffuse and limitless, in

Distinctions between Mothering and Teaching in Their Central Tendencies on Seven Dimensions

ROLE DIMENSION	MOTHERING	TEACHING
1. Scope of Functions	Diffuse & Limitless	Specific & Limited
2. Intensity of Affect	High	Low
3. Attachment	Optimum Attachment	Optimum Detachment
4. Rationality	Optimum Irrationality	Optimum Rationality
5. Spontaneity	Optimum Spontaneity	Optimum Intentionality
6. Partiality	Partial	Impartial
7. Scope of Responsibility	Individual	Whole Group

contradistinction to those of the school, which are specific and limited. The all-encompassing scope of the responsibilities, duties, and potential content of the relationships within families is "taken for granted." There is, according to Getzels, nothing about the young child that is not the parents' business. Thus, it is unnecessary to prove that any aspect of the child's life is within the purview of the family.

However, in the case of the school, relationships between teachers and children are specific in scope, function, and content in that the legitimate area of interaction "is limited to a particular technically-defined sphere, and what is not conceded to the school because of its special competence remains the private affair of the participants" (Getzels, 1974, p. 48).

Similarly, Newson and Newson (1976) point out that the responsibility society "enjoins on parents to their young children is quite different from that which it expects from teachers, nurses and other professionals . . . for one thing it has no fixed hours . . . parents of preschool children never go off duty" (p. 400).

Hess (1980) also points out that the "relationship between child and parent is different in several ways from the relationship between child and caregiver. The mother-child relationship calls for and justifies more direct, intimate interaction, including anger and discipline as well as love and support" (p. 149).

The distinctions in scope of functions proposed by Getzels (1974), by Newson and Newson (1976), and by Hess (1980) appear to become greater and sharper with increasing age of the pupil. To teachers in preschools and primary schools, the distinctions are problematic precisely because of the age of the child: the younger the child, the wider the range of functioning for which adults must assume responsibility. Thus, age—and the level of maturity associated with it—in and of itself gives rise to confusion between the two roles. To expect day care or preschool and primary school teachers to accept as wide a scope of functions as mothers do serves to exacerbate the long-standing problems of unclear role boundaries.

Intensity of affect. It seems reasonable to assume that both the intensity of affect (of all kinds) and the frequency with which behavior is marked by intense affect would also distinguish the two sets of role-takers. That is to say that, on the

average, when the central tendencies of mothers are compared with those of teachers, we should find more frequent and greater affective intensity in the behavior of mothers toward their children than teachers have. As Rubenstein and Howes (1979) have pointed out, the role of day care teachers is "both more specified and limited than the role of mother at home . . . the mother's emotional investment may enhance the likelihood of high-intensity affective responses" (p. 3).

Newson and Newson (1976) address this dimension by calling it "involvement" and suggest the quality makes parents different from other more "professional" caretakers. Specifically, they point out that

> a good parent-child relationship is in fact very unlike a good teacher-child relationship; yet because the roles have certain ingredients in common, though different proportions (nurturance, discipline, information-giving, for example), they are sometimes confused by the participants themselves, to the misunderstanding of all concerned. (pp. 401–402)

Pressure on parents to take on more instructional-type functions can lead to a variety of difficulties, one of which is exemplified in the case of a mother of a child with so-called "learning disabilities." The mother reported that she and her child were enrolled in a special "home intervention" program designed to teach mothers to give their learning disabled children regular rigorous instruction and skill training at home. Although unintended by the program leaders, one effect was that the mother became so anxious about being able to get her son to meet the specified learning objectives set for them both that their relationship deteriorated. With each lesson in which he fell behind, she became disappointed and tense, and the child became nervous and recalcitrant, which, in turn, increased her own disappointment and tension, and so forth until, as she reported, she realized "the boy had no mother." She withdrew from the lessons and asked the professionals to continue to teach him while she supported his struggle to learn by being the relatively soft, understanding, and nondemanding adult in his life.

In some ways, this story reminds us of common problems encountered when trying to teach a close friend or relative to

drive a car. We become aware of how much easier it is to be patient and understanding of a stranger than of someone close to us. Very often, the stress encountered in trying to teach someone very close to us places heavy burdens on the relationship.

In sum, one would expect the average level of affective intensity of the two role-takers to be distinguished from each other as indicated in the table. The affectivity dimension is closely related to the attachment dimension, to be discussed in the following section.

Attachment. Although the term "attachment" is widely used in professional as well as popular literature on child development and childrearing, it is a difficult one to define. In the literature on infant development, attachment refers to an underlying variable inferred from infants' reactions to strangers and to separations and reunions with primary caretakers (Cohen, 1974). Rutter (1979) indicates that attachment is a construct involving several features, noting that the concept should be distinguished from "bonding" to adults. The available definitions focus almost exclusively on the attachment of the child to adults. What is required for this discussion is a way of defining the attachment of the adults to their children. Ramey and Farran (1978) offer a broad definition of adult-child attachment, using the term "functional maternal attachment" to mean "simply those caregiving functions that must be performed for infants to sustain a normal development" (p. 2). The set of functions includes "at a minimum a refrain from physical and verbal abuse, the provision of information and affection, and direct personal involvement with the infant" (p. 2).

Research on the reciprocity and rhythmicity that characterizes normal mother-infant relationships brings us closer to a way of defining attachment so that the adult's attachment to the child is included. For the purposes of this discussion, attachment will be defined as the *capacity to be aroused to a wide range of behaviors and intense feelings by the status and behavior of the child.* If the attachment is a mutual one, then one would expect the behavior and feelings of either member of the pair to activate strong feelings and/or reactions in the other. This definition is intended to include such feelings as anxiety, alarm, fear, anger, and rage, as well as the proverbial "pride and joy" and other tender, loving, and caring emotions. Common usage of the term tends to refer primarily to the nurturant

side of the spectrum of feelings and behaviors of adults and to overlook the point that intense rage or terror in the face of impending danger to the child are also manifestations of what we call attachment. The definition proposed here implies that the opposite of attachment is not rejection or anger, but indifference.

In the table, the entry *optimum attachment* is intended to reflect the notion that, whereas development could be jeopardized by mother-child attachment that is too weak, it could also be undermined by excessive attachment, commonly called "smother love."[3]

The optimum attachment recommended here as an ideal feature of mother-child relationships is distinguished from the *optimum detachment* that should mark teacher-child relationships. The latter is often referred to as "detached concern" (Maslach & Pines, 1977). The term "detachment" is used not only in order to characterize the distinctions in the functions of the two role-takers, but to suggest also that it is appropriate for professionals to make self-conscious or deliberate efforts to distance themselves optimally from their clients. As Maslach and Pines (1977) have suggested, people who work intensively and intimately with people for extended periods of time inevitably suffer stresses associated with strong emotional arousal. As they point out, one of the ways of coping with such potential stress is to adopt techniques of detachment, which vary in their effectiveness as well as in their relationship to the conduct of work: "By treating one's clients or patients in a more objective, detached way, it becomes easier to perform the necessary interviews, tests, or operations without suffering from strong psychological discomfort" (p. 100). The authors go on to suggest that "detached concern" is a term that conveys "the difficult (and almost paradoxical) position of having to distance oneself from people in order to cure them" (p. 100).

Teachers who are unable to detach themselves optimally from their pupils and thus become too close to them are likely to suffer emotional "burn-out," a syndrome typically accompanied by loss of capacity to feel anything at all for the client. Certainly, those who are too detached at the other extreme, for whatever reason, are unlikely to be effective in their work with children because such extreme detachment is also accompanied by low responsiveness to client needs and demands.

One of the advantages mothers have over teachers in dealing with the stresses of attachment, in addition to intense affect, is their tacit knowledge that their child's psychological and physical dependency upon them will slowly but surely be outgrown. Teachers of day care, preschool, and kindergarten children, on the other hand, must cope with dependent children year in and year out. They must protect themselves from potential burn-out by developing an optimum level of detached concern—optimum in terms of their own emotional stability and effective functioning.

It should be noted also that teachers who are suspected of cultivating close attachments to their pupils in order to "meet their own personal needs," as the saying goes, are subject to substantial derision from colleagues and other professionals. Occasionally, such teachers come to perceive themselves as protecting children from their own parents, and occasionally the child's responsiveness to such teacher closeness gives rise to parental jealousy. As Anna Freud (1952) pointed out long ago, a teacher is neither mother nor therapist. A teacher with objective attitudes "can respond warmly enough to satisfy children without getting herself involved to a dangerous extent" (p. 232). She adds that a teacher must not think of herself as a "mother-substitute." If, as teachers, "we play the part of a mother, we get from the child the reactions which are appropriate for the mother-child relationship" (p. 231). All of this could result in rivalry with mothers and other undesirable consequences, making teacher-mother mutual support and complementarity difficult to develop.

Optimum detachment is also desirable for teachers because it can free them to make realistic evaluations of their pupils' development and learning—a major component of their work. Mothers, on the other hand, may not have to make realistic or so-called "objective" evaluations of their children's growth very often, although their lack of realism is a frequent source of frustration to teachers! In the long run, a mother's optimism about her child's progress, even if it seems excessive, is probably in the child's best interest. Such optimism in and of itself may contribute to the child's growth and development. Maternal pessimism, on the other hand, may be more damaging than any teacher's realism. Many children seem to think that mother, being omniscent and knowing the child more fully and completely than the teacher, is in possession of the "real truth"

and that when there is a discrepancy between the mother's and the teacher's evaluations, the former is more accurate. Experience suggests that individuals caught between their mother's pessimism concerning their potential for achievement and a teacher's optimism devote considerable energy to the problem of how to keep the "real truth" from the teacher, having no choice but to accept their mother's view as the true one. Such a discrepancy may account for some cases of lifelong doubts about one's true abilities.

Differences in the assessments of the two role-takers may be related to the differences in the baselines to which the child in question is being compared. They may also be due to dramatic differences in the child's behavior in the home and at school. It is not uncommon to hear both mothers and teachers comment on how strikingly different the child seems in the setting other than the one in which the child is commonly observed. Frequently, a mother will report that the teacher's description of her child is difficult to reconcile with her own experiences with the child. Studies of this phenomenon and the ways children cope with discrepant evaluations have not been found.

Another consideration leading to the recommendation of optimum detachment for teachers is the importance of minimizing the likelihood of incidents we might call "invasions of privacy" or other forms of encroachment upon aspects of children's socialization that are the legitimate domain of the family. Similarly, optimum detachment is recommended in order to help teachers avoid the ever-present temptation to engage in favoritism. Since it is unlikely that one can be strongly attached to more than one or two pupils, the risk of favoritism increases with increasing closeness to any one pupil. The optimum-detachment approach should help to reduce those dangers.

Many early childhood workers reject the value of optimum detachment because of their deep concern for children's need to feel closeness and attachment to adults. It is not clear how the proposed detachment would affect such "needy" children. But it is useful to keep in mind that, whereas the relationships between adults and children in day care, preschool, and primary classes are reciprocal, they are not necessarily symmetrical. In particular, it may be possible for young children to feel very attached to their teachers, even to worship and adore them, without the teachers' responding at the same level of

intensity. Such "unrequited love" during the early years may help the child to gratify needs for cathexis without placing severe emotional burdens on teachers. Research on such asymmetrical attachment might help to clarify the potential effects on such children of the detachment of their teachers.

Rationality. It is hypothesized here that effective mothering is associated, at least in part, with *optimum irrationality,* and that either extreme rationality or extreme irrationality may be equally damaging to the growing child. On the one hand, extreme rationality in a mother might be perceived by the child as cool, calculating unresponsiveness. Such a perception could lead to a variety of emotional disturbances. Extreme irrationality, on the other hand, may present the growing child with a range of problems stemming from insufficient predictability of the interpersonal environment.

By using the term "optimum irrationality" I do not intend to propose chaotic, scatterbrained mindlessness! Rather, the emphasis is upon adequate depth and strength of what we sometimes call "ego-involvement"—similar in nature to attachment as defined above.

The optimum irrationality suggested here is, in a sense, a matter of the mind, or the rational aspects of functioning, employed "in the service of the heart," so to speak. On the other hand, much literature prepared for and presented to teachers to remind them to bring their hearts to bear upon the rational aspects of their work and their professional minds.

The element of ego-involvement may also be illustrated by the notion that if a mother perceives herself as a failure at mothering, she is likely to experience painful guilt, strong feelings of inadequacy, and deep regret, perhaps for a lifetime. If, on the other hand, a teacher perceives himself or herself to have failed at teaching, he or she can leave the occupation in a fairly orderly fashion (for example, at the end of an academic year), and residual emotions like guilt, feelings of failure, regret, and defeat are likely to subside and disappear within a few months.

A different aspect of this dimension is captured in the expression "No one in her right mind would be a mother!" As Bronfenbrenner (1978, pp. 773-774) has put it, "in order to develop, a child needs the enduring, irrational involvement of one or more adults," by which he means, "Somebody has to be crazy

about that kid!" For modern, well-educated mothers, however, this may appear to be something of an overstatement.

A rational analysis of the pros and cons of motherhood would be unlikely to lead to a decision to undertake it. Indeed, it is difficult to find "reasons" for having children today. Offspring are not "useful" as a hedge against economic dependency in old age. Rather than being considered potential members of the family labor force and contributors to the family income, they are expected to become substantial drains on the family finances. Indeed, it is suggested by Stone (1975) that, as the economic value of children has decreased, the importance of affectional bonds has increased. Thus, even more than their forebears, modern parents have children just because they "have to"—irrationally, so to speak.

Teachers, on the other hand, should be *optimally rational* in that they should bring to bear upon their work careful reasoning concerning what is to be done or not done. Teaching calls for rational analysis of how to proceed in the education of young children on the basis of accumulated knowledge of how children develop and learn, and with an understanding of what is appropriate pedagogy for children of a given age range and experiential background. Presumably, the value of teacher training is precisely that it equips the future teacher with information and knowledge from the relevant "supply" disciplines and from pedagogy, all of which become resources for proceeding rationally in the work of teaching. It seems reasonable to assume that teachers' possession of relevant knowledge would serve to increase their confidence in their own behavior and in their general role competence. However, increased knowledge for mothers may have the opposite effect—and may serve to undermine what is often rather fragile confidence when facing "experts" who may appear comparatively cool and confident in their own advice and procedures.

Spontaneity. Along very similar lines, parents should strive to be *optimally spontaneous* in dealing with their children. Many programs of parent education run the risk of encouraging parents to become excessively cerebral and self-conscious in responding to their children. Extreme pressure to modify their behavior may lead parents to a condition called "analysis paralysis." This inability to act with adequate confidence could be damaging to the mother-child relationship. The resolve to

respond to one's child according to certain steps and procedures arrived at cerebrally (intellectually, as it were) may work well on the first or even second occasion. But very often, even the strongest resolutions break down under the weight of what is (and should be) an emotionally loaded relationship. Such "breakdowns" are related to the fact that the child's behavior/status really matters to the parent, a situation that comes with attachment as defined above. The cool, calculating, ever-reasoning or reasonable parent might be perceived by the child as indifferent and uncaring.

Another aspect of spontaneity is that it is precisely spontaneity that gives a mother's day-to-day behavior at home the variation and contrast growing children can use as a basis for hypothesis formulation and testing in their quest to make sense of experience. Indeed, it may well be that what gives play its reputed high value in children's learning derives from the spontaneous, casual, and often random variations produced in many types of play (Newson & Newson, 1979). These variations provide information that the child operates on and transforms into meaningful contents of the mind—for example, concepts, schemata, and so on. The opportunity to observe such spontaneous variation, and to obtain parental help in making logical inferences from them, may be the very thing to which slogans such as "Mother is the best teacher" refer.

By contrast, instruction can be defined as nonrandom, prespecified sets of stimuli or information *intended* to cause specific constructs and skills to be acquired. This contrast between play and instruction may also help to account for some of the dissension concerning appropriate programming for infant day care. On the one hand, there is pressure to rise above the custodial functions of day care and to provide "developmental" programs. On the other hand, formal lessons, instruction, or structured activities are thought to be inappropriate for the young. If the staff must await spontaneous "teachable moments," they may feel as though they are not earning their keep, not really "working," and role ambiguity may intensify.

Whereas mothers should be optimally spontaneous with their children, teachers should strive to be *optimally intentional* about their work. Teachers' activities should be largely predetermined and premeditated in terms of aims, goals, and broad objectives that are more-or-less explicit and that are responsive to parents (the primary clients) as well as to pupils.

With training and experience, teachers' intentional behavior takes on a spontaneous quality as well.

Spontaneity in the mother is important also in that it may contribute to the widest possible variations in behavior, which in turn give rise to the widest possible range of information becoming potentially available to the child. The availability of a wide range of information increases the probability that children will be able to locate information that matches adequately or optimally what they are ready to operate upon and/or assimilate. Furthermore, if the child's location of appropriate information is followed by the mother's focusing on the selected events or information, then the child's environment becomes a highly informative and responsive one. In studies of mother-infant interaction, researchers have suggested that adults exaggerate their facial and vocal expressions in order to provide "behavioral contrasts" in response to infants' "limited information processing capacities" (Tronick, Als, & Brazelton, 1980, p. 20). Thus, spontaneous variations in behavior ideally serve to increase the likelihood that matches between the child's readiness to process information and the adult's provision of information will be maximized. This assertion is supported indirectly by the findings of Hatano, Miyake, and Tiajina (1980). In a study of children's acquisition of number, the investigators, after having observed mother-child interaction 2 years earlier, showed that "the mother's directiveness was correlated negatively with the child's number conservation score" (p. 383).

As suggested above, instruction and pedagogy are concerned with narrowing the variations presented to the child so that specific information and child operations upon it can be maximized. However, if the narrow range of information presented by the pedagogue misses the mark for a particular child, the child's alternatives are fewer than they might be at home, and the result may be a sense of failure or inadequacy, which in turn may have deleterious effects upon the child's receptivity to education. Questions concerning what sets of variations, stimuli, or information should be made available to young children in preschool classes have occupied curriculum developers for many years, and definitive answers have not yet been formulated.

Perhaps it is this very *degree of intentionality* that most clearly distinguishes mothering from teaching and childrearing from

education. This is not to say that parents have no intentions! It is likely, however, that parents' intentions are less specific and explicit to parents themselves, as well as to others, than are teachers'—and are less formal, more global, and more personalized in that they are held for their own individual offspring rather than for a group. Research on the degree and specificity of intentions among the two sets of role-takers might help to sharpen understanding of these role distinctions.

Early childhood educators often speak appreciatively of the great amounts children learn from the hidden curriculum, from incidental learning, or from unintended or unplanned events. However, by definition, such unintended learning cannot be intended . . . one cannot intend something to happen unintentionally! Presumably, the purpose of training in pedagogy is to bring the consequences of one's pedagogical methods into closer and closer agreement with the intentions underlying one's pedagogy. Similarly, the virtue of instruction would seem to lie in the deliberate minimization of spontaneous or random variations in activities and responses, maximizing the likelihood that specific stimuli will be presented to the learner and that intended or predicted learning outcomes will most likely be assured.

Partiality. Along lines very similar to those already discussed above, it may be noted that mother-child relationships are not only charged with highly intense emotions but that "children in the family are treated as special categories" (Lightfoot, 1978, p. 22). Generally, parents do not merely want their children to be normal; they want them to be excellent! As Green (1983) points out, the aim of parents is "to secure the best they can get . . . they seek not simply the best that is possible on the whole, but the best that is possible for their own children" (p. 320). It is thus in the nature of things that parents are partial towards their own children; biased in their favor; champions of their children's needs; and exaggerators of their virtues, gifts, and assets. This *particularism* stands in sharp contrast to the *universalism* expected of teachers. Thus, it is appropriate for parents to ask teachers to make special allowances and provisions for their own children, and that is precisely what a teacher often cannot do since the teacher must treat the children impartially. Teacher impartiality means that, as needed, the teacher makes equally available to every child (whether the

child is liked or not) whatever skills, knowledge, insights, or techniques the teacher has at his or her disposal. Indeed, it is the very capacity to make all of one's pedagogical know-how available to a child one does not especially like that marks the teacher as a genuine professional.

Scope of responsibility. The great emphasis placed by early childhood educators on the importance of meeting "individual needs" of their pupils may have obscured yet another distinction between the roles of mothering and teaching—namely, that mothers are typically concerned about the welfare of one rather than all of the teacher's pupils. Consequently, a mother may make demands on the teacher that might place the welfare of the whole group of pupils at risk. Parents have a right to protect their own child's cultural/ethnic uniqueness and to ask of the teacher that special consideration, as appropriate, be made for their child. The teacher is responsible not only for every individual in the group, but for the life of the group as a unit. However, the teacher has to balance the importance of responding to unique individual needs against the responsibility for establishing and maintaining the ethos of the group through which the norms of behavior, expected levels of achievement, and even many feelings are learned.

Summary of dimensions. The seven dimensions outlined here reflect a common underlying variable that is difficult to name. As Lightfoot (1978) has put it:

> The universalistic relationships encouraged by teachers are supportive of a more rational, predictable, and stable social system with visible and explicit criteria for achievement and failure. [The teacher-child relationship] does not suffer the chaotic fluctuation of emotions, indulgence, and impulsiveness that are found in the intimate association of parents and children. . . . Even the teachers who speak of "loving" their children do not really mean the boundless, all-encompassing love of mothers and fathers but rather a very measured and time-limited love that allows for withdrawal. (p. 23)

Newson and Newson (1976), in a study of 700 elementary school children and their relationships to their families and schools, also underscore this point:

> Parents have an involvement with their own children which nobody else can simulate . . . The crucial characteristic of the parental role is its partiality for the individual child. . . . The best that community care can offer is impartiality—to be fair to every child in its care. But a developing personality needs more than that: it needs to know that to someone it matters more than other children; that someone will go to unreasonable lengths, not just reasonable ones, for its sake. (p. 405)

Our understanding of the potential problems arising from confusing the two roles might be helped by studies of those women who are simultaneous occupants of both roles. Informal observation and experience suggest that teachers who are also mothers of young children may have elevated expectations of their own children as well as of themselves. It has been reported that such mothers are sometimes ashamed and embarrassed by their emotionality with their own children, expecting themselves to be as level-headed at home as they are in the classroom. Similarly, some expect their own children to exemplify perfection to enhance their credibility as teachers. But such emotionality at home and detachment on the job at school are appropriate distinctions in role performance.

To the extent that such role fusion does occur and produces these kinds of expectations, clarification of the distinction between the mothering and teaching roles may help to alleviate some of the strains for those who occupy both roles at the same time. In addition, some research on the ways such dual role-takers define the two roles and what sources of role fusion, confusion, and strain they identity would be helpful.

Implications for Parent Education

One of the major functions of parent education programs should be to help parents think through their own goals for their own children, to develop and clarify what kind of lifestyle they want to construct for the family, and to identify what they themselves perceive to be the major issues deserving attention. The program should offer parents insights and various kinds of information while encouraging them to accept only what makes sense to them and what is consistent with their own preferences.

Parent education programs should also encourage and support parents' confidence in their own impulses and in their own competence. It is hypothesized that, in the long run, efforts to support impulses already in place and available to the mother will, for example, result in greater change and improvement in parental functioning than efforts to change or replace those impulses directly. This hypothesis rests on the assumption that parental confidence, in and of itself, leads to greater effectiveness (particularly in matters relating to the assertion of authority in parent-child interaction) and that greater effectiveness, in and of itself, leads to greater confidence. This "looping" or "circularity," in which the effects of behavior become in turn the causes of effects, would seem to be especially powerful in relationships marked by high intensity of affect—that is, in relationships in which *effects really matter to the actors*. The hypothesis is also related to the assumption that greater parental confidence is more likely to lead to greater openness to new information than is parental embarrassment, shame, or low self-confidence.

As indicated earlier in this discussion, parent education that is excessively technique-based or technique-oriented may yield positive effects in the short run but greater feelings of failure and/or guilt in the long run. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that parenting is not primarily technical but is more dispositional and ideally largely unselfconscious. Furthermore, consistency in the application of techniques tends to subside after a few weeks, and this inconsistency may be followed by heightened feelings of incompetence or guilt. A related point here is that children respond not so much to the specific behavior of the parents as to the meanings they themselves assign to that behavior. But the meanings children attribute to any given episode are a function of the larger pattern, of which they perceive a specific episode to be a part. Children may have difficulty giving the meanings their mothers hope they will to technique-bound episodes. Thus, for example, parental reliance on specific techniques, phrases, or other maneuvers may confound the problems issuing from faulty patterns of behavior or from characteristic parental dispositions. The latter take time to change and reshape, and may perhaps be more effectively modified in parents who have more, rather than less, confidence (see Hess, 1980).

Parent educators often report that the spontaneous impulses of some of the parents they work with put children in jeopardy, usually in relation to their psychosocial rather than intellectual development. To what extent such judgments are matters of taste, preference, and/or value differences between parent educators and their clients is not yet clear. In fact, it may be in the nature of things that parent educators have to work in the absence of sufficient certainty concerning the potential benefit or damage of a given maternal pattern. One way to cope with such uncertainty is to scrutinize as carefully as possible each case of potential jeopardy with regard to the certainty of risk or danger to the child. When, in the educator's best judgment at a given time, the potential for danger seems reasonably clear, then referral to specialized agencies should be made. It would be unethical not to do so. However, when examination of the available information raises doubts about the potential danger to the child, then the next appropriate step seems to be to encourage and support the mother's own pattern of responding to the child. Differences in taste, philosophical positions, and/or values probably underlie many of the judgments that educators make concerning the mother's need to change her behavior. However, it may be useful to remember that parent educators as well as teachers of young children are bound to take firm stands on their beliefs and philosophical positions. The latter serve to give teachers the kind of certainty required for action in complex situations, in which reliable data cannot serve as a basis for decision making (see Katz, 1977).

Powell (1980) suggests that, when parents are given new information or are pressed into changing their patterns of behavior in ways that are discrepant with their own values, they minimize the discrepant stimuli and reduce their influence. Powell's analyses of the various parental strategies for coping with the pressures placed upon them to change serve to remind us that education in parenting is not an easy matter (see Durio & Hughes, 1982). It may be that trying to get mothers to instruct their children in preacademic tasks is easier than helping them with deeper and more complex aspects of development (for example, self-reliance, moral development, social skills, motivation, and so on).

Implications for Teachers of Young Children

The discussion presented above suggests a number of points that may help teachers in their encounters with mothers, as well as in coping with the day-to-day problems of working with young children.

It seems obvious, even without detailed analyses of the two roles, that the special contributions of each role-taker to the ultimate socialization of the young child should be mutually understood, accepted, and respected. Parent educators, as well as those who write in the popular press for parents, might help by acknowledging the complementarity of these functions rather than by trying to fix blame on one or the other for whatever social disaster is capturing popular attention at a given moment. Expressions like "Parents are the child's best teacher" seem to suggest that teachers are, if not the worst, then certainly a distant second best. The comparison itself is inappropriate. What should be emphasized are the functions and characteristics of each role and how the efforts of each role-taker might be supported by the other.

Another implication of the analyses attempted in this discussion is that teachers should take time periodically to consider whether they have achieved an optimum level of involvement or detachment in their relationships with children. The risk of teacher burn-out is a real one, especially when the work is with children whose families are under stress. Teachers who work together as members of a teaching team might also help each other by developing a system for giving each other relief during those moments when the emotional load feels too heavy.

In addition, teachers may be helped by focusing on those aspects of the child's functioning they actually do control. A teacher cannot change the family into which a child is born or with whom he or she is living. Nor can the teacher generally change very much of the parents' behavior. But a teacher can take responsibility for the time a child is actually directly in his or her care and can focus on making that time as supportive, enriching, and educative as possible. The latter is a sufficiently big task by itself without adding to it the need to make up for the child's alleged missing parenting!

Teachers may also find it helpful in their relations with mothers to acknowledge and accept the mother's advocacy for and partiality toward her own child as normal components of

motherhood. Similarly, as mothers approach teachers to request special dispensations for their own children, teachers' acknowledgement of the "naturalness" of such demands may help them to respond more patiently, less defensively, and more professionally than they seem typically to do. Teachers might be mindful on such occasions that, although they may practice impartiality within their own classrooms, they champion their own classes when representing them as a group in comparison with other teachers' classes! On such occasions, teachers also ask for special dispensations and also describe their own classes as having special or unique needs, gifts, and strengths—much the way mothers do for their individual children. Recognition of this phenomenon may help teachers respond to parents with greater respect and understanding and to see the adversarial aspects of their relationship as inherent in their roles rather than as personality conflicts.

Conclusion

Much of the present discussion is speculative, based on informal observations and reports of the experiences of teachers, parents, and parent educators. Research that would ascertain the validity of these speculations would be helpful. Of all of the potential research efforts on matters raised in this discussion, those that would advance our understanding of the stresses and coping skills of teachers and day care workers have the highest priority. Present social and economic developments suggest that more and more children and their parents will come to depend upon professional child care workers and preschool teachers and that more parents will stand to benefit from well-designed parent education programs. Much is yet to be learned about how such professional activities should be conducted and about what kinds of working conditions are desirable. Certainly, mutual support of the persons involved should help each to cope more effectively with the stresses encountered when living and working with young children every day.

NOTES

[1]A review of history indicates persuasively that, although "child abuse" may be a modern term, the phenomenon is not a modern one (Langer, 1974; Stone 1977). It may

be that the standards by which we define child abuse are constantly revised upwards so that today's norm is tomorrow's abuse. Perhaps this tendency is in the nature of the development and history of civilization.

[2] The teacher-parent distinction discussed here may apply to fathers as well as to mothers. There appears to be no biological or other a priori reason why the behaviors attributed to mothers in this discussion could not also be ascribed to fathers. Current research indicates that fathers do have a powerful impact upon their young children's development; however, though equally important, the father's influence is different from the mother's (Zigler & Cascione, 1980).

[3] What constitutes an optimum degree of attachment for any given mother-child pair would be difficult to predict or prespecify since we only know whether the attachment is optimum if the child is observed to be thriving; however, failure to thrive may not always be attributable to disturbances in attachment.

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The Professional Preschool Teacher

The term "professional" means many things to many people (see Ade, 1982; Hoyle, 1982). While not all of these meanings can be fruitfully explored here, for the purposes of this discussion, the aspects of professionalism of chief concern are the application of advanced knowledge to one's work (Zumeta & Solomon, 1982), the use of judgment based on that advanced knowlege, and the adoption of standards of performance below which no professional's performance may be allowed to fall.

As defined here, the advanced knowlege applied to the professional preprimary teacher's work is derived from developmental psychology and is drawn largely from research on children's development of social cognition. However, a full description of the work of preschool teachers would surely show that it involves the application of advanced knowlege from many other fields as well.

The term "judgment" is used here to refer to such cognitive processes as diagnosing and analyzing events, weighing alternative courses of action, estimating the potential long term consequences of momentary actions and decisions, and other information processing in which advanced knowledge comes into play.

In the matter of practicing according to standards of performance, the distinction between a professional and an amateur may be useful: An amateur does what she does "for the love of it," perhaps occasionally when she feels like it, and without remuneration.[1] On occasion, the amateur may be very skillful indeed, even though not necessarily formally trained. However, a practicing professional is (ideally) committed to performing at the same high standards, whether in the mood or not, on

every occasion, day in and day out, and whether she feels like it or not. Indeed, one of the major functions of a professional organization is to set standards of performance and to remind members of them. These standards are established to offer guidelines for the typical situations all members of the profession can be expected to encounter and are based on the best available advanced knowledge that applies to typical problems encountered during practice.

Outlined below are some speculations concerning how a professional preschool teacher or child care worker might respond to a standard situation encountered during her work. The examples are intended to show what professional judgment might be like in a very ordinary and typical teaching situation. These responses are contrasted with those of a person without training, and a few points are also added concerning what might constitute unprofessional responses to the same situation.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSES IN A STANDARD PREDICAMENT

In order to explore what professional judgment might include, let us take a situation that almost every teacher of young children is bound to encounter sooner or later—and probably often. To set the stage, imagine a teacher of a group of 20 4-year-olds whose outdoor equipment includes only two tricycles. In a group of American 4-year-olds in such a situation, squabbles will inevitably arise concerning whose turn it is to use one of the tricycles.

Specifically, imagine that a child named Robin goes to the teacher and protests, saying, "Leslie won't let me have a turn!" There are probably scores of "right" as well as "wrong" ways to respond in this situation. The types of professional judgment processes a teacher might engage in are presented below under three interrelated headings. Specifically, these discussions focus on what could be taught in the situation, clinical questions relating to individuals in the incident, and curriculum and management concerns.

What Could Be Taught in the Situation?

Ideally, a trained teacher approaches the situation described by asking herself, What can I be teaching? In formulating answers to this question, the professionally trained teacher takes

into account the most reliable knowledge about the development of children; the norms of the age group; and the goals of the parents, the school, and the community at large.

The teacher's answers to the question should involve some of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions outlined below. The specific content of these skills may vary with the "philosophy of education," "learning theory," and goals to which the individual teacher or preschool subscribes. Those listed below reflect the present author's own views of the kinds of learning and teaching that seem appropriate at the preprimary level.

The examples of professional responses presented here depict the kind of judgment that might be expected of a well-trained, experienced teacher at the developmental stage referred to as "maturity" (Katz, 1972). Needless to say, the mature and experienced teacher formulates her judgment of the situation very rapidly—in a manner sometimes thought of as "intuitively" (i.e., processing large amounts of information, concepts, knowledge, etc. at great speed). A professional judgment of the situation could lead the teacher to answer the question, What can I be teaching? along the following lines.

Social skills. Certainly, the teacher may encourage the development of skills in the social realm. Some of these social skills concern turn taking, negotiating, and coping.

1. Turn taking: The teacher can assist in the complex processes of learning to "read" others' behaviors for signs of when a request for a turn is most likely to work, when to give up, and when to come back for another try. Sensitivity to similar cues embedded in another's behavior that help decide the next best move may also be encouraged. Such processes are analogous to those studied in discourse analysis which describe how young children learn the turn-taking skills required for participation in conversation (see Frederikson, 1981; Shields, 1979; Wells, 1981). Indeed, some behavioral scientists suggest that all social relations involve turn taking.

   Thus, the teacher might suggest to Robin that he or she simply wait a few minutes, do something else for a little while, and then try asking Leslie again for a turn. She might also suggest to Robin that Leslie be observed for signs of weariness or boredom with the tricycle, indicating that a bid for a turn as soon as such signs appear is likely

to be successful. In such a case, the teacher is helping Robin to strengthen observational skills that could aid the turn-taking process.

2. Negotiating: The growing literature on social cognition and its development indicates that children during the preschool period can begin to hone the skills involved in striking a bargain (i.e., being able to guess what will appeal to another child and being able to make a deal in which each participant's preferences or needs are considered [Rubin & Everett, 1982]).

   In such a case, the teacher encourages Robin to consider what might appeal to Leslie. Specifically, the teacher might say to Robin, "Go to Leslie and say, 'I'll push you on the swing if you give me a turn on the tricycle . . .' " In this way, the teacher offers a verbal model of how the negotiating session might go.

3. Coping: A teacher has a role to play in helping children to cope with having their requests, pleas, demands, and so forth turned down or rejected. Children do not have to win every conflict or succeed at every confrontation, and the ability to accept defeat and rejection gracefully probably has to be learned. The teacher can help Robin to learn this social grace by responding to the complaint by saying (in a matter-of-fact tone) something like, "All right. Perhaps Leslie will give up the tricycle later. There are lots of other things to do in the meantime . . ." Specific activities can then be suggested.

Verbal skills. The tricycle situation is also a good one in which to teach children how to express their feelings and assert their wishes more clearly and effectively.

1. Assertive phrases: It might be that Robin has not stated the desire for a turn with the tricycle very clearly. Perhaps Robin simply tugged at the tricycle or even whined a bit. The teacher can respond to Robin's complaint by saying something like, "Go back to Leslie and say, 'I've been waiting a long time. I really want a turn . . .' " In such a case, the teacher models a tone of moderate but firm assertiveness that the child can imitate and introduces a simple phrase that the child can use when the teacher is

not there. The professional teacher is committed to helping children acquire competencies that can be used when she is not present and that aid the child's development in the long term.

2. Conversational phrases: It may be that the children involved in the incident have few appropriate phrases and are only just learning to engage in heated conversations. In a study of how young children become friends, Gottman (1983) has shown that a factor in success at friendship formation is the ability to de-escalate conflict situations. Those children who could defuse conflict were able to state their reasons for disagreeing with each other. The professional preprimary teacher is in an ideal position to help children acquire some of the skills involved in verbalizing conflicting wishes and opinions. Teaching such verbal skills can be done through a technique called Speaking-for-Children (see Schachter & Strage, 1982), a process in which the adult speaks to each child on behalf of the other and keeps up the conversation between contentious parties by speaking for them. In this way, the teacher offers phrases and models a verbal approach to a conflict situation.

   Using this technique, the teacher might say to Leslie, "Robin really wants a turn," to which Leslie might grunt a refusal. The teacher then might say to Robin something like, "Leslie does not want to give up the tricycle yet." Robin might respond to this with a whining protest, in which case the teacher can paraphrase to Leslie what Robin is feeling by saying, "Robin really would like a turn now," and so on. In short, the teacher keeps up the conversation, verbalizing to each child what she infers to be the feelings of the other.

Social knowledge. This typical preschool incident also provides a good opportunity to teach social knowledge. Nucci and Turiel (1978) have shown that preschool children understand the distinction between social conventions and moral transgressions, and thus can be helped with simple moral and social insights. The preschool teacher is in an ideal position in situations like the one described to stimulate and strengthen children's knowledge of social concepts such as the ones outlined below.

1. Social perspective: A professionally trained teacher can help children to learn some distinctions between what is a tragedy and what is not. Not getting a turn to ride a tricycle on a given day is not a tragedy. Loss of a loved one, the suffering of others, or separation from a very favorite friend or pet might be tragic. The teacher helps the child put desires and wishes into perspective by responding to the complaint with gentle, good-humored empathy, rather than with tragic tones or a great rush to rescue the child from distress.

   Thus, the teacher might say to Robin something like, "I know you're disappointed not to get a turn on the tricycle, but there are other things you like doing . . ." Once again, the tone should be matter-of-fact and pleasant, without hint of reprimand.

2. Rudiments of justice: There is reason to believe that preschoolers are ready to absorb some of the rudiments of justice (Johnson, 1982), particularly in the form of "ground rules" (i.e., the notion that the rules and restraints a child is asked to observe are asked of others too and protect him or her as well as the others). Thus, a professionally trained teacher's response in the present situation would not be merely "Leslie, I want you to give Robin a turn now." This statement would also be followed by the tag "And when you need help getting a turn with something, I will be glad to help you also."

   Similarly, if the situation were to lead to combat, the teacher might say to the instigator, "I won't let you hit X, and I won't let anyone hit you either." The last part of such a statement, the tag, is what reassures the aggressor that he or she is in a just environment in which everyone's rights are protected and everyone's needs are considered. One of the important elements of the professional behavior illustrated here is the teacher's acceptance of responsiblity for the learning and development of both the victim and the aggressor (see Grusec & Arnason, 1982). Thus, when Leslie hogs the tricycle and refuses to give Robin a turn (and when other techniques have failed), the teacher might say to Leslie, "Five more minutes, Leslie, then I want you to let Robin have a turn, and when you need help with something just let me know."

3. Observers' understandings and skills: Professional judgment also includes taking into account what the children observing the incident might be learning. Virtually all the teacher responses outlined above can provide indirect instruction for the uninvolved children watching the incident from the sidelines. These children might also learn techniques of negotiation, bargaining, and verbal strategies for use in confrontation. In addition, the observing children might be learning what techniques or strategies "work" with which children. If they have also had an opportunity to observe the teacher state the ground rules, they are likely to feel reassured that they are in a just environment and, while they are prohibited from harming others, others are similarly constrained against harming them.

Dispositional learning. In addition to teaching social skills and social knowledge, the professional teacher also considers which personal dispositions could be strengthened or weakened in this situation.

1. Empathic and altruistic dispositions: A professionally trained teacher is aware of the accumulating evidence that young children are capable of empathic and altruistic dispositions and that adults can strengthen these dispositions in various ways (Grusec & Arnason, 1982). For example, if Leslie resists giving up the tricycle, the teacher might say something like, "Robin has been waiting for a long time, and you know how it feels to wait a long time," thereby stimulating or arousing empathic feelings and nurturing the disposition to be charitable as well. This should not be said in such a tone as to imply "sin" or hidden evil impulses, of course!

   Sometimes a child refuses to accede to the request of another precisely because he or she does know what it feels like to be in the other's position (e.g., to have to wait for a long time). In such cases, empathic capabilities are there, but charity is not. It is not very useful for the adults in such situations to say things like, "How would you like someone to do that to you?" What answer can a young child give to such a question? In cases in which charity toward another person is lacking, the teacher must

exercise judgment concerning how to respond in the best and long term interests of both children. Of course, confrontations like these may be inevitable and benign; their significance should not be exaggerated or overinterpreted.

2. Experimental disposition: The tricycle incident is a good example of the many situations arising with young children in which the teacher can strengthen children's dispositions to approach social interactions and confrontations experimentally, as problem-solving situations in which alternative solutions can be invented and tried out—and in which a few failures will not be debilitating.

   Returning to the incident, then, when Robin complains that Leslie won't give up a turn, the teacher can respond by modeling a mildly assertive tone and saying something like, "Go back and say to Leslie, 'I really want a turn. I've been waiting a long time.' If that doesn't work, come back and we'll think of something else to try." If the teacher suggests what action to take without adding the notion of coming back to try again, and if that suggestion fails, Robin's frustration or sense of incompetence may be increased. The tag in the teacher's statement ("Come back and we'll think of something else to try") strengthens the disposition to tackle social situations experimentally and can be of value to children in the long term.

3. Complaining and tattling: Professional judgment may indicate that Robin has acquired a strong disposition to be a complainer and that this tendency should be weakened. The professionally trained teacher tries to assess the legitimacy of complaints and to discriminate between those requiring action and those lodged by the child in order to secure something wanted rather than needed. If, in the teacher's best judgment, the complaint requires no real intervention, Robin may be sent back to the situation with some suggested strategies for coping with it, as outlined above. Complainers do not always have to win or succeed at their complaints; if they do succeed often, complaining can become a strong and persistent disposition.

   The term "tattling" refers to behavior in one child that is intended to get another one into trouble. Very often,

behavior that appears to be tattling on the part of the young child may simply reflect a childlike understanding of the seriousness of the teacher's demands. The teacher must assess whether the child is simply reporting what he or she thinks the teacher wants to know about—or whether the intent is to get another child into trouble and the disposition to do so is growing. In the latter case, based on her professional judgment, the teacher may decide to weaken this disposition by sending the child back to cope with the conflict. When children are older, perhaps 6 or 7 years of age, the teacher can explain the conditions under which behavior that we ordinarily think of as tattling is warranted (e.g., when the consequence of some activity unknown to the teacher may constitute a physical or psychological danger to someone).

Clinical Judgments

The term "clinical" as defined here indicates the processes of taking into account the meaning of the behavior of each individual child involved in a particular incident. The professionally trained teacher attempts to put the behavior in a specific incident into the context of all other known behavior and history of the individuals involved. Thus, the teacher might ask (subliminally, of course) some of the following kinds of questions:

1. Is this a typical day for Robin? If so, is Robin becoming a chronic attention seeker? Is the threshold at which Robin feels he or she is getting attention too high?[2] If so, how can the threshold be brought down?

2. How much experimentation can Robin take at this time? Perhaps his or her disposition to be self-assertive is not yet robust enough to risk failure or rejection right now, and the teacher judges that Robin requires intervention and/or support in this particular confrontation at this particular time.

3. Does Leslie's behavior reflect progress? Perhaps this is the first time Leslie has exhibited self-assertion, and the incident is a welcome sign that earlier shyness or submissiveness is being overcome.

4. Can the two individuals in this particular incident learn the "right" things if they are left to resolve the situation for themselves? Some children can learn more mature and effective ways to resolve problems when left to their own devices, while others cannot. Thus, the teacher might also ask, When should I use a partial intervention? Should I keep completely out of the way? One of the important factors the professional teacher considers in this respect is that if one of the participating children is a bully, he or she may get better at bullying by being left to resolve the conflict alone. In the children's own long term interests, the teacher will try to minimize the success of the bully or bossy child.

5. Will the present pattern of behavior of either of the two children involved cause them trouble later on if it is left unamended now?

6. Are either of these children the victim of "character definition?" That is to say, have these children's characters been defined (e.g., Leslie as selfish bully or Robin as whining weakling) so that they are bringing their behavior into line with the traits attributed to them (see Grusec & Arnason, 1982)? There is ample evidence from research stemming from attribution theory that even adults, in many situations, bring their behavior into line with the expectations of those with whom they interact. It is not surprising that children are likely to persist in patterns of behavior that fit adults' characterizations of them. Taking such knowledge into account, the professional teacher scrutinizes her own definitions of the children involved to make sure that she has not "boxed them in" to being bullies or complainers or any other undesirable character types.

Curriculum and Management Considerations

As well as considering the skills and dispositions that can be encouraged and the clinical judgments that may be made, the professionally trained teacher will take into account the implications of the situation for curriculum and management. Specifically, the teacher might take up some of the following questions:

1. Is the behavior in this incident "normal" for this age group? In this culture? In the culture of the particular children involved?

2. Has the right kind and/or quantity of equipment been obtained for children of this age, background, culture, and so forth? Are there enough suitable alternative activities? Is the curriculum sufficiently appropriate and challenging for the two children in this incident or in other incidents of the same kind?

3. Might the children benefit from being given examples of ways of dealing with problem situations? The trained teacher knows that heavy doses of preaching and moralizing are unlikely methods with which to treat the behavior of young children. However, the teacher may select certain kinds of stories to tell the children which carry a relevant moral at an appropriate level of complexity.

The professional teacher is likely to ask herself how often a particular kind of incident is occurring and whether its frequency signals a need for adjustment of the curriculum. If these kinds of "run-ins" occur several times every day, it suggests that the curriculum should be evaluated and some efforts should be made to provide activities to engage the children's minds more fully. In handling a typical situation, the teacher can thus address not only the individual children involved but also the program as a whole.

Such program decisions include bringing knowledge of development and learning to bear on formulating responses to children's behavior and in making teaching decisions. The professional also considers the long term development of the children involved and not just the incident and behavior of the moment. In addition, the professional considers the growth, development, and learning of all the children involved in the incident: that of both participants—the apparent aggressor and the apparent victim—as well as that of the children observing.

NONPROFESSIONAL RESPONSES TO THE INCIDENT

Many people without professional education or training are involved with children in groups. In many preprimary settings, parents, foster grandparents, and volunteers contribute greatly

to the quality of the program by their participation. The term "nonprofessional" implies no inferiority; rather, the designation is used in order to contrast the application of knowledge and professionally accrued experience and practices with common-sense responses and to focus attention on how professional education and judgment come into play in daily work with other people's children.

In order to explore this contrast, it may be helpful to imagine how the person without professional education and experience might respond when confronted with this hypothetical situation. In general, the untrained individual is likely to focus on what is happening rather than what is being learned. Similarly, she is likely to see the situation as calling for "putting out the fire," hoping that will be the end of it, rather than for teaching a variety of skills, knowledge, or dispositions. In other words, the nonprofessional may wish simply to put a stop to the incident without considering which of many possible interventions is most likely to stimulate long term development and learning. (If teachers took the same approach and saw teaching as periodic—if not inevitable—fire-extinguishing, they would be "smoke detectors" rather than teachers!)

Many people without the benefit of professional education and experience might see the preferred response to this incident to be to distract Robin from the present misery. The use of distraction makes "good common sense." Distraction very often does work and is therefore a favored technique. However, for 3- or 4-year-olds it is not a necessary or preferred technique. While distraction "works," it does not really teach alternative approaches to the situation. On the contrary, it may teach children that complaining, tattling, and so forth very frequently get adult attention.

Other nonprofessional responses in situations like the tricycle squabble include saying such things to the children as, "Cut it out!" "Don't be so selfish!" "Be nice!" "Don't be nasty!" "We take turns in this school!" (even though we just didn't), and so on. Such exclamations are unlikely to do any harm, but they are also unlikely to teach the participants alternative approaches to the situation. Some nonprofessionals also respond to squabbling over equipment by putting it away or locking it up. This does "work," of course, but it does not teach, and teaching is the professional's commitment.

Occasionally, a nonprofessional is heard to issue a threat in such situations, as in the statement "If you don't let Robin have a turn, you won't go the zoo with us on Friday." There are several problems with threats. One is that they are often empty. Will the threatener really keep Leslie away from the zoo? How does one make the threatened sanction match the seriousness of the unwanted behavior? Sometimes the threats are out of proportion to the transgression. Then, when a really serious transgression comes along, what threats are left? Perhaps most 4-year-olds cannot yet sense that threats indicate that the adult has lost or given up control over the situation. But some 4-year-olds do have this awareness. If so, their testing behavior is apt to increase, and the content of the relationships in the class may become focused on the rules, on what happens when they are broken, and on who is really in charge. When the content of relationships is dominated by such matters, the atmosphere becomes a highly contentious one. Furthermore, threats do not teach the children alternative skills for solving the problem, nor do they encourage new knowledge or strengthen desirable dispositions.

Some adults resort to bribery in situations like the example provided. They may say something like, "If you give Robin a turn with the tricycle, I will let you hand out the cookies at snack time." The danger in using a bribe is that it tends to devalue the behavior in which one wishes the child to engage. In other words, generosity and charity are discounted as not being worth engaging in for their own sakes. Bribery often "works." The professional question is, however, What does it teach?

Some adults use so-called "time-out" procedures—or the removal of the child from contact with the ongoing life of the group—in the case of a child's persistent refusal to cooperate with other children. Time-out procedures often seem to "work." Indeed, many teachers are trained to use them. The main problem is that time-out procedures do not teach new skills or desirable dispositions, although they do change behavior. As long as the child's mental ability is reasonably normal for his or her age, it is not necessary to circumvent the mind by insisting on something like a time-out chair. Futhermore, the cognitive connection between placing one's seat on a particular chair and acceding to another child's request for a turn

with a piece of equipment must be fairly obscure if not confusing to a 4-year-old (see Katz, 1977-a).

A variant of the time-out procedure is instructing a child to sit aside and "think things over" and to come back when he or she is "ready to behave properly." Such techniques are not likely to be harmful unless used excessively or with hostility. But they are unlikely to solve persistent behavior problems, and they also fail to teach alternative approaches to the situations at hand. Studies of what children actually do think or feel on such occasions would help us to understand the consequences of these techniques.

Many adults in such predicaments moralize about the virtues of "sharing," "kindness," and "generosity," preaching the evils of selfishness. Though such approaches are unlikely to do children harm, they are not likely to teach various strategies to use when adults are not present—especially if moralizing is used to the exclusion of all other methods. Another common response of adults without training is to become preoccupied with the feelings and needs of the "victim" and to neglect the feelings, needs, and development of the child who seems to be the aggressor. The professional, on the other hand, is committed to responding to the feelings, needs, and development of all the children in her charge.

Many nonprofessionals respond to situations like this one by demanding to know things like who had it first, who started it, or how a conflict situation arose. The intent of such responses seems to be to discover whose fault the problem situation is or where to assign blame. For preschoolers, this line of inquiry is not usually relevant or helpful. The emphasis is best placed on teaching the children strategies for resolving the problem.

It has been reported that some untrained adults, when confronting situations like the hypothetical tricycle squabble, would say to Leslie such things as, "Your behavior makes me sad" or "Your acting that way makes me feel bad." While such statements are unlikely to harm the children, they seem to draw attention to the adult's own internal states and perhaps add a layer of guilt to the child's feelings. Again, however, the basic problem with this response is that it fails to teach the participants ways of coping with the predicament.

Finally, the nonprofessional person in such a situation is apt to employ not only common sense but also impulse, customs,

or erroneous folk wisdom. The danger also exists that this individual may occasionally use shaming comparisons with other children in order to intimidate a child so that he or she will give in to the adult's demand.

UNPROFESSIONAL RESPONSES TO THE INCIDENT

One of the characteristics of a fully developed profession is that its members subscribe to a code of ethics that serves as a guide to professional conduct (Katz, 1977-b). Conduct violating any part of the code is unethical and therefore "unprofessional." Nonprofessional behavior is that which is determined by personal predeliction or common-sense wisdom rather than by professionally accrued knowledge and practices; unprofessional behavior is that which contravenes agreed-upon standards of performance of the society of professional practitioners or the code of ethical conduct they have adopted.

In general, unprofessional or unethical behavior is the result of giving in to the temptations of the situation at hand. It could be, for instance, that Leslie's and/or Robin's behavior frequently puts the teacher into the kind of predicament described in this discussion. On a given occasion, the teacher might feel a bit weary of it and stand by and let the chips fall where they may. Once in a while, she might silently pray that an aggressive child in this kind of situation will "get what he or she deserves," hoping that another child will bring the offender down a peg or two. Not only is it unethical to let one's own feelings dictate the response to the situation, but the "school of hard knocks," although powerful, is likely to provide the wrong lessons to children. From the school of hard knocks, most children learn to be hard.

It should be kept in mind that the professionally trained teacher is not without feelings of the kind alluded to here; what is professional in this situation is to "school" one's feelings with the knowledge and insight that constitutes professional judgment and to respond in terms of that judgment rather than in terms of the feelings or temptations of the moment. Occasionally, we are tempted to blame the children for creating the predicament or to blame their parents for not raising them properly. However, what is relevant is not whom to blame but what to teach in this situation.

CONCLUSION

I have used the example of a typical incident arising in groups of young children to illustrate professional and nonprofessional ways of responding. Professional responses include the use of judgment based on the most reliable knowledge and insight available. The professional exercises judgment in the service of the long term best interests of the children; the untrained person working with children is more likely to respond in terms of the immediate situation and to settle for what "works" well for the moment rather than what is most likely to enhance the children's long term development.

Only a very small sample of the potential uses of contemporary knowledge about children's development and learning has been discussed here. However, it is hoped that even this brief description of what mature professionalism in preschool teaching is like will add weight to the proposition that the effective training and education of preprimary teachers can help to make a significant contribution to children's development and learning.

NOTES

[1]The increasing number of male teachers in the early childhood area is indeed welcome. However, since most preprimary teachers continue to be female, the feminine pronoun has been used throughout this discussion.

[2]The concept of "threshold" is used here to refer to individual differences in the level at which attention is perceived. Some children feel as though they are getting attention with occasional smiles and friendly interludes; others require high frequencies and intensities of contact. Such differences in threshold are learned (in interaction with predisposing characteristics).

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Ethical Issues in Working with Young Children

What should a teacher do when—

A parent demands that a method of discipline that goes against the teacher's own preferences be used?

The owner of the day care center appears to be giving false information to the licensing authorities?

A parent complains about the behavior of a colleague?

A child tells a story about law-breaking behavior observed at home?

A mother pours out all her personal troubles?

The list of questions of this kind is potentially very long. But answers to such questions cannot be drawn from research reports, from the accumulated knowledge of child development, or even from educational philosophy. The questions raised and their answers lie in the realm of professional ethics.

One of the characteristic features of a profession is that its practitioners share a code of ethics, usually developed, promoted, and monitored by a professional society or association. Agreement as to whether a given occupation is really a bona fide profession, or when it becomes so, is difficult to obtain (Becker, 1962). In this discussion, the term "profession" is used in its general sense to refer to an occupation that is client or service centered as distinguished from those occupations that are profit or product centered or bureaucratically organized.

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While day care and preschool workers are not yet fully professionalized, their work frequently gives rise to the kinds of problems addressed by codes of ethics.

The purpose of this examination is to encourage discussion of the complex ethical problems encountered by day care and preschool workers. I shall attempt to suggest some of these central issues by addressing the following questions:

What do we mean by a code of ethics?

Why is a code of ethics important?

What are some examples of ethical conflicts in day care and preschool work?

What steps might be taken to help day care and preschool workers resolve these conflicts?

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A CODE OF ETHICS?

Of all the dictionary definitions of ethics available, the one most relevant to this discussion is from Webster's second edition, unabridged: "The system or code of morals of a particular philosopher, religion, group, profession, etc." More specifically, Moore (1970) defines ethics as "private systems of law which are characteristic of all formally constituted organizations" (p. 116). He notes also that these codes "highlight proper relations with clients or others outside the organizations, rather than procedural rules for organizational behavior" (p. 116). Similarly, Bersoff (1975) says that ethical considerations "refer to the way a group of associates define their special responsibility to one another and the rest of the social order in which they work" (p. 359).

Maurice Levine (1972), in an examination of the complex ethical problems that arise in the practice of psychiatry, proposes that codes of ethics can be understood as one of the methods by which groups of workers cope with their temptations. He suggests also that ethics have the function of minimizing the distorting effects of wishful thinking and of limiting or inhibiting one's destructive impulses. In addition, Levine asserts that codes of ethics embody those principles or forces that stand in opposition to self-aggrandizement—especially when self-aggrandizement might be at the expense of others. Similarly, according to Levine, ethics provide guidelines for

action in cases of potentially significant damage to others or potential harm to another's interests. In much the same spirit, Eisenberg (1975) suggests that the more powerful a change agent or given treatment the riskier its application. Thus, as the risk to either the client or the practitioner increases, the necessity for ethical guidelines seems to increase.

From time to time, I have asked students in early childhood education to try to develop codes of ethics for themselves. Invariably, they produce sets of statements that are more appropriately defined as goals rather than ethics, although the distinctions between the two are not always easily made. The statement "I shall impart knowlege and skills" seems to belong to the category of goals. The statement "I shall respect the child's ethnic background" more readily seems to belong to the category of ethics. The major distinction between the two categories seems to be that goals are broad statements about the effects one intends to have. Ethics, on the other hand, seem to be statements about how to conduct oneself in the course of implementing goals.

In summary, a code of ethics may be defined as a set of statements that help us to deal with the temptations inherent in our occupations. A code of ethics may also help us to act in terms of that which we believe to be right rather than in terms of what is expedient—especially when doing what we believe is right carries risks. Situations in which doing what is right carries high probability of getting an award or of being rewarded may not require a code of ethics as much as situations rife with risks (e.g., risking the loss of a job or a license to practice, facing professional blacklisting or even harsher consequences). Codes of ethics are statements about right or good ways to conduct ourselves in the course of implementing our goals. They are statements that encourage us (i.e., give us the courage) to act in accordance with our professional judgment of what is best for the clients being served even when they may not agree. Codes of ethics give us courage to act in terms of what we believe to be in the best interests of clients rather than in terms of what will make our clients like us. Ethical statements help us to choose between what is right versus what is, in a sense, more right; choices between right and wrong are not problematic. Needless to say, the ethical principles implied in the code reflect the group's position on what is valuable and worthwhile in society in general.

For the purposes of this discussion, the main features of codes of ethics considered are the group's beliefs about (1) what is right rather than expedient; (2) what is good rather than simply practical; (3) what acts members must never engage in or condone even if those acts would "work" or if members could get away with them; and (4) acts to which members must never be accomplices, bystanders, or contributors.

WHY IS A CODE OF ETHICS IMPORTANT?

The specific aspects of working with preschool children that give rise to the ethical problems addressed here are the power and status of practitioners, multiplicity of clients, ambiguity of the empirical base, and role ambiguity. Each aspect is discussed below.

Power and Status of Practitioners

It is taken as a general principle that, in any profession, the more powerless the client vis-a-vis the practitioner, the more important the practitioner's ethics become. That is to say, the greater the power of the practitioner over the client, the greater the necessity for internalized restraints against abusing that power.

Preschool practitioners have great power over young children, especially in day care centers. The superior physical power practitioners have is obvious. In addition, practitioners have virtually total power over the psychological "goods and resources" of value to the youngsters in their care. The young child's power to modify a teacher's behavior is largely dependent on the extent to which a teacher yields that power. Whatever power children might have over their caregivers' behavior is unlikely to be under conscious control. Obviously, young children cannot effectively organize strikes or boycotts, or report malpractice to the authorities. Children may report to a parent what they perceive to be abusive caregiver behavior, but the validity of such reports is often questioned. Furthermore, parental reactions to these reports may be unreliable. In one case, a 5-year-old reported to his mother that he had been given only one slice of bread during the whole day at the center as punishment for misbehavior. His mother was reported to have responded by saying, "Then tomorrow, behave yourself."

It is neither possible nor desirable to monitor teachers constantly in order to ensure that such abuses do not occur. As Moore (1970) puts it, since there are often no other experts watching and the child's self-protective repertoire is limited, a code of ethics, internalized as commitments to right conduct, might help to strengthen resistance to occupational temptations and help practitioners to make ethical choices.

Another aspect of the work of preschool and day care practitioners that affects ethical behavior is the relatively low status of practitioners in the early childhood field. Parents seem far more likely to make demands on practitioners for given kinds of practices in preschool and day care centers than they are to demand specific medical procedures from pediatricians, for example.

A case in point is an incident concerning a young mother who brought her 4-year-old son to the day care center every morning at 7:30 and picked him up again every evening around 5:30. She gave the staff strict instructions that under no circumstances was the child to nap during the day. She explained that when she took her son home in the evenings she was tired from her long day and needed to be able to feed him and have him tucked away for the night as soon as possible. It is not difficult to picture the problems encountered by the staff of this proprietary day care center. By the middle of the afternoon, this child was unmanageable. The state regulations under which the center was licensed specified a daily rest period for all children. Sensitivity and responsiveness to parental preferences, however, were also main tenets of the center's philosophy. Although the staff attempted to talk to the mother about the child's fatigue and intractability, the mother had little regard for the staff's expertise and judgment, and total disregard for state licensing standards.

In the situation described above, the staff was frustrated and angered by the mother and the child and felt victimized by both. Could they put the child down for a nap and get away with it? A real temptation! Would that work? Would it be right? It might have been right to ask the mother to place her child in a different center. But such a suggestion has risks: A proprietary day care center is financially dependent on maintaining as full enrollment as possible. Also, in some communities, alternative placements are simply not available.

Accumulated experience suggests that 4-year-olds thrive best with adequate rest periods during the day, and a state regulation requiring such a program provision is unlikely to be controversial. The problem outlined above could have been solved by invoking the state's regulations. But state regulations are not uniformly observed. Why should this particular one be honored and others overlooked?

Working daily with young and relatively powerless clients is likely to carry with it many temptations to abuse power. Practitioners may have been tempted at one time or another to regiment the children, to treat them all alike, to intimidate them into conformity to adult demands, to reject unattractive children, or to become deeply attached to other children. Thus, the hortatory literature addressed to preschool practitioners reminds them to respect individual differences, to accept children, to use positive guidance, and to treat children with dignity. It seems reasonable to suggest that most such exhortations should be part of a code of ethics.

Multiplicity of Clients

A code of ethics may help practitioners to resolve issues arising from the fact that they serve a variety of client groups. Most preschool workers, when asked, "Who is your client?" usually respond without hesitation, "The child." But it is probably more realistic to order the client groups into a hierarchy so that parents are the primary group, children second, and the employing agency and the larger community third (Bersoff, 1975; Beker, 1976). Each group of clients in the hierarchy may be perceived as exerting pressures for practitioners to act in ways that may be against the best interests of another client group.

As a case in point, preschool workers often lament the fact that many parents want their preschoolers to learn to read, while they themselves consider such instruction premature and therefore potentially harmful to the children. At times, the best interests of both parents and children may be in conflict with agency interests and expectations, and so forth. A code of ethics should help to clarify the position of each client group in the hierarchy and should provide guidelines on how to resolve questions concerning which of the groups has the best claim to practitioners' consideration.

Ambiguity of the Empirical Base

Many differences of opinion about courses of action cannot be resolved by reference to either state or local regulations or to a reliable body of evidence. It is taken as a general proposition that weakness in the empirical base of a professional field often causes a vacuum likely to be filled by ideologies. The field of day care and preschool education is one that seems to qualify as ideology-bound (Katz, 1975), giving rise to a variety of temptations for practitioners. The uncertainty and/or unavailability of reliable empirical findings about the long term developmental consequences of early experiences tempts practitioners (and their leaders) to develop orthodoxies as well as to become doctrinaire in their collective statements. Such orthodoxies and doctrines may be functional to the extent that they provide practitioners with a sense of conviction and the confidence necessary for action. Such conviction, however, may be accompanied by rejection of alternative methods and denial of some of the facts that may be available. A code of ethics could serve to remind practitioners to eschew orthodoxies, to strive to be well-informed and open-minded, and to keep abreast of new ideas and developments.

Role Ambiguity

Research and development activities in recent years have resulted in increased emphasis on the importance of the developmental and stimulus functions of day care and preschool practictioners, as compared with more traditional custodial and guidance functions. In addition, recent policies related to early childhood education emphasize parental involvement at all levels of programming, concern for nutrition and health screening, and relevant social services. These pressures and policies add to and aggravate a long-standing problem of role ambiguity for preschool workers.

The central source of ambiguity stems from the general proposition that the younger the child served, the wider the range of the functioning for which adults must assume responsibility. Day care and preschool practitioners cannot limit their concerns only to children's academic progress and role socialization. The immaturity of the client presses the practitioner into responding to almost all of the child's needs and behavior. Responsibility for the whole child may lead to uncertainty over

role boundaries in, for example, cases of disagreement with parents over methods of discipline, toilet training, sex-role socialization, and so on. Clarification of the boundaries of practitioner roles and/or the limits of their expertise could be reflected in a code of ethics.

Summary

In brief, four aspects of the role of day care and preschool workers seem to imply the necessity for a code of ethics: high power and low status, multiplicity of client groups, ambiguity in the empirical base, and ambiguity in the role boundaries of practitioners. It seems reasonable to suggest that the actual problems encountered by practitioners in the course of daily situations typically reflect combinations of several of these aspects of the field.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF ETHICAL PROBLEMS?

Some examples of situations that seem to call upon preschool practitioners to make ethical choices are outlined below. Specifically, the examples are discussed in relationship to major client groups, such as parents, children, and colleagues and employers.

Ethical Issues Involving Parents

Perhaps the most persistent ethical problems faced by preschool practitioners are those they encounter in their relations with parents. One common source of problems is the fact that practitioners generally reflect and cherish so-called middle class values and tend to confuse conventional behavior with normal development. An increase in practitioners' self-consciousness about being middle class (in the last dozen years) seems to have increased their hesitancy to take a stand in controversies with parents.

Within any given group, preferences and values may vary widely according to parents' membership in particular cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups. A practitioner may, for example, choose to reinforce children as they acquire conventional gender-role characteristics. But one or more parents in the client group may prefer what has come to be called an "alternative lifestyle" with respect to sex-role socialization. Or a parent may demand of her child's caretaker that her son not be

allowed to play with dolls, even though the caretaker may prefer not to discourage such play. When practitioners are committed to respect and respond to parental values and input, they may be faced with having to choose between what is right and what is right. What data or pedagogical principles can be brought to bear on such choices?

Similar types of parent-staff ethical conflicts arise from discrepancies between parental and practitioner preferences with respect to curriculum goals and methods. For example, practitioners often prefer informal, open, or so-called "child-centered" curriculum goals and methods, while many parents opt for more traditional approaches. If parents are the primary clients of the staff, what posture should the staff take when discrepancies in preferences occur? Specifically, suppose that a child in an informal setting produces a piece of artwork that appears to his parents to be nothing more than scribbles. However, the caregiver respects the work as the child's attempt at self-expression and also values the kinds of fine motor skill development such a product supports. Suppose further that the practitioner knows that the artwork might cause a parent to make demeaning remarks to or even scold the child. Suppose the same caretaker also knows that, if the child brings home work regarded by the parents as evidence of mastering the "Three R's," the parents will offer compliments and rewards. How should the caretaker resolve the conflict between pedagogical preferences and the demands of the home on the child? What choice would be in the best interests of the child? It is unlikely that such issues can be settled on the basis of available evidence (Spodek, 1977).

Disagreements between practitioners and parents as to which child behaviors should be permitted, modified, or punished are legion. Some of these disagreements are a function of differences between the referent baselines of the two groups. Practitioners tend to assess and evaluate behavior against a baseline derived from experience with hundreds of children in the age group concerned. Thus, their concepts of what is the normal or typical range of behavior for the age group are apt to be much wider than those of the parents. As a result, practitioners' tolerance for children's behavior (such as thumb-sucking, crying, masturbation, using dirty words, aggression, sexual and sex-role experimentation, etc.) is likely to

be greater than that of the ma'ority of parents. Parents do not universally accept the wisdom that comes from practitioners' experience; not infrequently, parents instruct caregivers and teachers to prohibit what practitioners themselves accept as normal behavior. How can practitioners respect parental preferences and their own expertise as well?

Yet another kind of problem between caregivers and parents appears to involve the child very little. In the course of their daily work, preschool practitioners often encounter mothers who attempt to involve them too personally in their lives. For example, a mother may spill out all her problems to her child's preschool teacher. When this happens, the practitioner may find such information unwelcome. The parent in this case may be seeking advice on matters that lie outside of the practitioner's training and expertise. As a result, the practitioner may want to refer the parent to specialized counseling or treatment. Are there risks in making such referrals? What about the possibility that the unwanted information implies to the practitioner that the child might be in psychological danger? Will the mother reflect the recommendation for specialized responsibility to the whole child? Such cases are common in many other occupational situations requiring confidentiality and sensitivity in handling information about clients' private lives. A code of ethics should address issues concerning the limits of expertise and the confidentiality of information.

Another ethical issue in practitioner-parent relations concerns the risks and limits of truthfulness in sharing information with parents and colleagues. For example, parents often ask caregivers and preschool teachers about their children's behavior. In some cases, a parent wants to check up on his or her child in order to know whether the child is persisting in undesirable behavior. If the practitioner knows that a truthful report will lead to severe punishment of the child, how should a reply be formulated? Similarly, in filling out reports on children's progress for use by others, practitioners often worry as to whether a truthful portrayal of a given child will result in prejudicial and damaging treatment by practitioners receiving the report in the subsequent setting.

Withholding information is a type of "playing God" that generally causes considerable anxiety in teachers. In a similar way, let us suppose that a practitioner has good reason to believe

that making a positive report to a parent about a child's behavior (even though the report might be untrue or exaggerated) will improve relations between the child and his or her parents. Even if the ploy has a high probability of working, would it be ethically defensible?

In summary, day care and preschool practitioners face constant ethical dilemmas in their relations with parents. Contemporary emphasis on greater involvement and participation of parents in children's education and care is likely to increase and intensify these problems. A code of ethics cannot solve the problem encountered by preschool practitioners, but it can provide a basis upon which staff members and their clients might, together, confront and think through their common and separate responsibilities, concerns, and ideas about what they believe to be right.

Ethical Issues Involving Children

One of the sources of ethical conflicts for preschool workers stems from the fact that the young child has not yet been socialized into the role of pupil. A 10-year-old has been socialized to know very well that some things are not discussed with teachers at school. The preschooler does not yet have a sense of the boundaries between home and school or of what one should or should not tell caretakers and teachers. Children often report about parental activities that practitioners would rather not know about; sometimes, such reports may be of private or even illegal things going on at home. One problem with this sort of information is that the reliability of the report is difficult to assess. It is important for the practitioner to realize that, when presented with a situation like this one, asking leading follow-up questions may encourage a child to tell too much. What should a practitioner do with such information? Practitioners sometimes find themselves at a loss for words when this occurs (Rosenburg & Ehrgott, 1977).

Another type of problem related to program activities also seems to have ethical implications. Children's enjoyment of certain activities should of course be considered in program planning, but this attribute is not sufficient in and of itself to justify inclusion of a particular program activity. For example, children like to watch television but are not adequate judges of what programs are worthwhile. This type of problem involves

complex pedagogical, psychological, and ethical issues (Peters, 1966). Sometimes such problems are confounded by caregivers' tendencies to be motivated by a strong wish to be loved, accepted, or appreciated by the children. Children's affection and respect are useful indicators of the practitioner's effectiveness, but such positive responses should be consequences of right action rather than of motives underlying the practitioner's choices and decisions.

Preschool practitioners are increasingly under pressure to teach their children academic skills. On the whole, practitioners appear to resist such pressures, not only on the basis of the possible prematurity of such skill learning but also as part of a general rejection of so-called "structured" or traditional schooling. Occasionally, however, the pressure may be so great as to tempt practitioners into giving their charges crash courses on test items, thereby minimizing the likelihood of a poor showing on standardized tests. Even if practitioners can get away with such tactics, should they be ethically constrained against doing so? Should a code of ethics address questions of what stand to take on the uses and potential abuses of tests for assessing achievement, for screening, and for labeling children?

Ethical Issues Involving Colleagues and Employing Agencies

One of the most common sources of conflict between coworkers in preschool settings centers around divergent views on how to treat children. Staff meetings conducted by supervisors, or supervisory intervention and assistance on a one-to-one basis, seem to be the appropriate strategies for resolving such conflicts. But when a parent complains to one teacher about another, how should the recipient of the complaint respond? Such cases often constitute a real temptation to side with the complainant. But would that response be right? Perhaps one guideline that may be relevant to such inter-staff conflicts would be for the individual practitioners involved to ask themselves (and other appropriate resource people) whether the objectionable practice is really harmful to children. If the answer, after serious reflection, is clearly yes, then action by the appropriate authority must be taken to stop the harmful practice. But the state-of-the-art of day care and preschool education does not yet lend itself to definitive answers to all ques-

tions of clear and present danger to children. If the practices in question are objectionable merely on the grounds of taste, ideological persuasion, or orthodoxy, then practitioners should resist the temptation to indulge in feuds among themselves and alliances with parents against one another.

Examples of ethical dilemmas facing practitioners in their relations with employers include those in which practitioners are aware of violations of state or local regulations, misrepresentations of operating procedures in reports to licensing authorities, or instances of an owner's misrepresentation of the nature of the program and services offered to clients. To what extent should practitioners contribute, even passively, to such violations? Most day care and preschool personnel work without contracts and thus risk losing their jobs if they give evidence or information that might threaten the operating license of their employing agency. Should employees be silent bystanders or accomplices in these kinds of situations? Silence would be practical, but would it be ethical?

Another type of dilemma confronts practitioners when agencies providing day care services require declarations of income from parents in order to determine their fees. One such case concerned a welfare mother who finally obtained a job and realized that the day care fees corresponding to her income would cause her actual income to amount to only a few more dollars than she had been receiving on welfare. Yet she really wanted to work. Her child's caregiver advised her not to tell the child care agency that she was employed and to wait for the authorities to bring up the matter first. It is easy to see that the practitioner in this situation was an active agent in violating agency and state regulations. But the practitioner also knew that alternative arrangements for child care were unavailable to this mother and that the child had just begun to feel at home and to thrive in the day care center. The practitioner judged the whole family's best interests to be undermined by the income-fee regulations. How would a code of ethics address such a predicament?

WHAT NEXT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN?

Some preliminary steps toward developing a code of ethics have already been taken. The Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) adopted a code of

ethical conduct responsibilities in 1976. The code enumerates a total of 34 principles divided into three categories: (1) general principles for all members; (2) additional principles for members who serve children in a specific capacity; and (3) principles for members who serve through ancillary services (such as training, licensing, etc.). Each category is further delineated into four subcategories for membes who are trainers, licensing personnel, parents, and supervisors and administrators.

Many of the principles listed in the MnAEYC code correspond to suggestions made in this discussion. A number of the principles, however, might be more applicable to job descriptions than to a code of ethics (e.g., Principle 29, for supervisors, states that the supervisor should provide regular inservice training to further staff development and to meet licensing requirements when appropriate). Three of the principles are addressed to members who are parents. Since parents are clients rather than practitioners, the appropriateness of including them in a practitioners' code of ethics is doubtful.

An initial code of ethics for early childhood education and development professionals has also been proposed by Ward (1977). Ward proposes 19 statements of commitments under three headings: (1) for the child, (2) for the parents and family members, and (3) for myself and the early childhood profession. These statements cover a wide range of aspects of working with young children, and together with the code adopted by MnAEYC could provide a useful basis for further discussion.

It seems advisable to begin at a local level to refine these codes or develop another code. Small groups of workers at a given day care or child development center or locale might constitute themselves into an ethics committee and thrash through issues to determine where they stand. Local efforts and problems could be shared with the ethics committees of statewide associations. The process of developing and refining a code of ethics will undoubtedly be slow and arduous.

Many practitioners are cynical about the value of such codes. But, as Levine (1972) points out, the work of developing a code involves self-scrutiny, which in and of itself may strengthen resistance to the many temptations encountered in practice. Furthermore, recent research on helping behavior suggests that individuals' responses to their own conflicting impulses are strongly influenced by their perceptions of the norms of the

group with whom they identify (Wilson, 1976). The norms of our group of colleagues, articulated in a code of ethics, may help to give us the feeling that colleagues will back us if we take a risky (but courageous) stand or censure us if we fail to live up to the code. The daily work of day care and preschool practitioners is fraught with ambiguities. A code of ethics may help practitioners to cope with greater success with these ambiguities.

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Assessing the Development of Preschoolers

It is only natural that from time to time parents wonder whether their children are developing normally. Parents often ask questions like, Is my child doing what he or she is supposed to at this age? and, Do all children of this age behave this way in certain situations? Numerous other questions parents raise reflect a desire to know whether the child's development is going well. Preschool teachers also look for ways to assess their pupils' progress and to determine whether there is something in particular that they should be doing to aid the child at a particular time.

Normative scales tend to focus on development as though it were some kind of product, outcome, or end point. Such scales are used to indicate where an individual child stands with respect to all others of a given age or population. They are used primarily for comparing individuals or subgroups with larger groups with respect to specific behaviors or achievements. However, this discussion will address the question of whether a child's development is going well at a given moment in terms of ongoing or continuous developmental processes. Together, the behavioral dimensions outlined below indicate whether or not a child is thriving at the moment of observation. As we look at each child in a given preprimary class and consider the following items, we can begin to formulate answers to the question, What aspects of a particular child's development need encouragement, support, or intervention right now?

This paper was prepared in 1983, while the author was Fulbright Visiting Professor at the M.S. University of Baroda, Gujarat, India, and is a product of collaboration with the staff of the Department of Child Development, Faculty of Home Science.

For children whose physical and mental endowments are normal, ups and downs in the long course of development inevitably occur and occasionally require special attention. In order to assess whether or not a child's development is going well, or whether it is in a "down" period requiring intervention, the following categories of behavior can be observed. Difficulties in any single one of these categories should not cause alarm. Indeed, difficulties in several of the categories do not imply irreversible problems. Rather, these difficulties help us notice those periods when the child's own life or situation, for a wide variety of possible reasons, is out of adjustment with his or her emerging needs.

The judgment as to whether or not special and specific interventions are necessary should not be based on 1 or 2 days of observations. If the child is 3 years old, a picture of his or her functioning on these behavioral criteria over a period of approximately 3 weeks provides a sufficient sample on which to make an assessment. If the child is 4 years old, 4 weeks give a sufficiently reliable picture of the quality of the child's life. At 5 years, add another week, and so forth.

1. Sleeping Habits

Does the child fall asleep easily and wake up rested, ready to get on with life? Occasional restless nights, nightmares, or grouchy mornings are all right. The average pattern of deep sleep resulting in morning eagerness is a good sign that the child experiences life as satisfying.

2. Eating Habits

Does the child eat with appetite? Occasional skipping of meals or refusal of food is all right. Sometimes a child is too busy with activities more absorbing than mealtime to be concerned with food. Or perhaps the child is more thirsty than hungry and thus resists the parents' anxious pleading over vitamins and other nutritional abstractions. A child who, over a period of weeks, eats compulsively or obsessively as though famine were around the corner, or who constantly fusses about the menu or picks at the food, is likely to have "gotten on the wrong foot."

The function of food is to fuel the system adequately in order to be able to get on with the important business of life. It

should not become a central part of the content of adult-child interaction. However, it is wise to keep in mind that children, like many adults, may eat a lot at one meal and hardly anything at all at the next. These fluctuations do not warrant comment or concern as long as there is reasonable balance in the nutrition obtained.

3. Toilet Habits

On the average, over a period of 3 or 4 weeks, does the child have bowel and bladder control, especially during the day? Occasional "accidents" are all right, especially if there are obvious mitigating circumstances such as excessive intake of liquids, intestinal upset, or simply being too absorbed with ongoing activity to attend to such "irrelevancies." Children who sleep well often take longer to stay continent at night.

4. Range of Affect

Does the child exhibit a range of emotions? Over a period of a few weeks, does the child show the capacity for joy, anger, sorrow, grief, enthusiam, excitement, frustration, love and affection, and so forth? (Not all in one day, of course!) A child whose affect is "flat" or unfluctuating—always angry, always sour, always gay or enthusiastic—may be in trouble. The capacity for sadness indicates the presence of its correlates, attachment and caring. These emotions are important signs of healthy development. Low intensity of feeling, or unvaried or flat affect, may signal the beginning of depression.

5. Variations in Play

Does the child's play vary over a period of time? Does the child add elements to the play, even though he or she plays with the same toys or materials? If the child always ritualistically or stereotypically engages in the same sequence of play, using the same elements in the same way, he or she may be emotionally "stuck in neutral," so to speak, and in need of some temporary special help. Increasing elaboration of the same play or optimum varieties of play literally indicate sufficient inner security to "play with the environment."

6. Curiosity

Does the child occasionally exhibit curiosity, adventure, and even mischief? If these behaviors are constantly displayed, they

may signal a search for boundaries. If the child never pokes at the environment or never snoops where forbidden, then he or she may not be pushing against perceived boundaries enough for healthy development, perhaps due to fear of punishment or to possession of an overdeveloped conscience.

7. Responses to Authority

Does the child usually accept adult authority? Occasional resistance, assertion of an individual point of view or desires, and expressions of objections, with an ultimate yielding to the adult, indicate healthy socialization processes. Always accepting adult demands and restrictions without a peep suggests excessive anxiety, fear, or perhaps a weakening of self-confidence or curiosity.

8. Friendship

Can the child initiate, maintain, and enjoy a relationship with one or more other children? The evidence is now persuasive that the preschool years are a period of rapid learning of social interactive competence and that lack of such competence can have long term negative consequences for development (Pullatz & Gottman, 1981). The social and cognitive skills and knowledge required for making and keeping friends are considerable, and experience in the company of other children in and of itself is not enough to ensure optimum learning. Some children need "coaching" from the sidelines (Asher, Oden, & Gottman, 1977).

A child who often plays alone is not in trouble as long as he or she is not doing so because of excessive fear or lack of competence in relating to other children. Similarly, a child who frequently makes great claims concerning his or her own superiority over others may be seeking self-reassurance or may feel in danger of losing some privileged status or of failing to meet parents' lofty expectations. Such behavior may create difficulties in the development of social competence or ability to build relationships later on, and it calls for some kind of intervention.

9. Interest

Is the child capable of sustained involvement, absorption, and interest in something outside of himself or herself? Does

the child's capacity for interest seem to increasing to longer intervals of involvement in activities, games, or play? The emphasis here is on sustained involvement in "activities" rather than in such "passivities" as television. The child's increasing and sustained involvement in television or other passive pursuits may signal difficulties requiring adult intervention. In addition, the child who cannot become absorbed in an activity, who rarely "stays with it," or who infrequently sees a project through to completion may need help.

10. Spontaneous Affection

Does the child express spontaneous affection for one or more of those with whom he or she spends lots of time? This expression is not the required goodnight kiss but an impulsive declaration of love. Demonstrations of affection vary from family to family and among cultures and subcultures, and such variations must be taken into account. Nevertheless, in ways that are culturally appropriate, a child whose development is going well is likely from time to time to let significant others know that he or she loves them, loves being with them and near them, and at the same time is experiencing the world and life as gratifying and satisfying. Excessive expressions of this kind, however, may signal doubts about the strength of major attachments and may call for assessment of the child's interpersonal environment to determine whether intervention is necessary.

11. Enjoyment of the "Good Things of Life"

Is the child capable of enjoying the potentially "good things of life?" For young children, playing with others, going on picnics or to parks and parties, family gatherings or festivals, exploring new places, and materials and toys are these potentially good things. If a child does have a problem (e.g., shyness, fear of insects, food dislikes, etc.), but the problem does not prevent him or her from participating in and enjoying these goodies, then it is reasonable to assume that, with a little help, the problem will be outgrown. This view should reduce the probability of overinterpreting children's behavior and assuming great difficulties or abnormal development on the basis of momentary setbacks. If, however, problems do get in the way of enjoyment or prevent participation in events, then an adult should intervene with appropriate help.

Suggestions for Intervention

The first three items on this proposed list—sleeping, eating, and toilet habits—are particularly sensitive indicators of the child's development since they are behaviors that only the child has control of and that no other person can perform for the child. The other items are somewhat more culture-bound and more situationally determined. However, these latter dimensions are likely to represent preschool teachers' most important goals for their pupils, and they are generally aspects of behavior teachers can observe or obtain information about from parents.

It is generally a good idea to survey children in the class periodically and make an assessment of their status on each of the criteria. When the pattern of the child's functioning on as many as half of these dimensions seems less than optimum over a period of about a month, some remedial action should be taken. Not all cases of less-than-optimum functioning can be satisfactorily solved by the teacher. For example, difficulties in sleeping, eating, and toileting probably require parental action more than teacher intervention. However, much will be gained by parents and teachers working together, and other manifestations of "down-turns" in development can be greatly alleviated by teachers' interventions.

While each individual case will require its own special intervention, some general approaches are worth trying right away. For example, no matter what the underlying cause, virtually all young children respond to spending time alone with an adult who is important to them. The important adult may be a teacher, parent, uncle, or anyone else with whom the child has a significant relationship. The time can be spent walking around the block, helping out with tidying up a closet, gardening, baking a cake, or doing anything else the child really enjoys. The activity itself should be simple; it need not be a complicated trip to a faraway place. The idea is that having someone special all to oneself for 15 minutes a day convinces the child that he or she is cared for better than anything else one does. A few minutes a day for a few weeks will invariably help alleviate whatever stresses the child has encountered. Once the level of stress is reduced and the child is more relaxed, he or she may then become more responsive to a teacher's or parent's guidance and suggestions about how to cope with the problem at hand.

Another approach many find helpful is to try to imagine what the child would be like without his or her problem, whatever it is. Ask yourself, How would the child walk, talk, interact without the problem? What might the child say or do if in fact he or she were rid of whatever the problem appears to be? In other words, build a picture in your imagination of the child's potential. Make the picture as detailed as you can. Once the picture is clear, treat the child the way you have imagined the child to be. While this powerful technique is not magical, its effect comes from the fact that it tends to cause you to see more clearly than before the child's attempts to deal with the problem constructively. Perhaps the attempts were too feeble, or your expectation of negative behavior did not allow you to notice these strategies before.

Furthermore, the exercise of imagining a child the way he or she might be without problems helps you to adjust your own attitudes. Perhaps dealing with the situation has been a source of anxiety or tension, and you have even reached the point where you wish the child would be absent—but he or she never is! This experimental picture, created in the laboratory of your own mind, can play a significant role in helping you respond more positively. Even adults tend to meet positive or negative expectations held by others; imagine how much power such adult expectations can have over children.

Whatever interventions are appropriate for a particular child in a given situation, if the overall and average picture of the child's functioning, obtained from a sampling of the behavioral categories described here, indicates a low point in development, preschool teachers are in an ideal position to do something to help the child "get back on the right foot."

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Helping Others with Their Teaching

Most programs for young children make provisions for the inservice education of staff members. Those who provide the inservice education may be directors of Head Start programs or day care centers; they may be Child Development Associate (CDA) field trainers or supervisors of student teaching, curriculum coordinators, consultants, or advisors (see Katz, 1977-a). In all such roles aimed at helping others with their teaching, similar situations, issues, and problems arise, and similar decisions and choices have to be made.

The purpose of this discussion is to present some principles, assumptions, and techniques that might be useful for teacher educators, whether working with inservice teachers or caregivers, CDAs, or even prospective teachers. Often the person participating in inservice education is not in the traditional student role of working with an abstract or theoretical set of topics organized into formal lectures. Instead, the learner is an adult with strong involvement in the object of the interaction—namely, his or her own teaching behavior.

Throughout this discussion, the term "principle" is used as defined by R.S. Peters (1970) to mean that which makes a consideration relevant. As such, principles are like decision rules, which help to guide choices among alternative courses of action. They are not ironclad, fail-safe rules to be applied mindlessly, but are intended to be qualified by such phrases as "under some circumstances" or "as the situation warrants." Although these phrases are not mentioned repeatedly below, each principle outlined in the following discussion should be considered with appropriate qualifiers in mind.

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PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF FOCUS

All of us who teach, at whatever level, have to face the fact that we cannot offer our learners all the possible advice, suggestions, commentary, or information that might be helpful or instructive to them. When we work with people in any situation, we constantly make choices concerning the nature of the interactions we have. Like all teaching, the work involved in helping others with their teaching is embedded in relationships. It is useful to assume that relationships have to have content and that people cannot just "relate" without some content that is mutual or shared. In the case of professional relationships, the content is about something outside of the two or more individuals in the relationship.

The potential contents of human relationships are so large and broad that some decisions must be made concerning which content is most relevant, appropriate, and useful at any given time in any given situation. Similarly, there are probably more than a dozen "right" or effective ways to respond in any given situation—and probably just as many ineffective ways. Since we cannot respond in all the ways that are possible, choices have to be made. Obviously, many different factors affect those choices. Some choices are made by invoking tradition (e.g., this is how we have always done it). Others are made because it is thought that teachers either want or expect them, or will attend carefully to them. Some choices reflect philosophical commitments. The principles outlined below are recommended for use when considering what content to focus on when interacting with the teachers we want to help.

1. Focus on the Teacher's Understandings of the Situation

The term "understandings" is used here to refer to teachers' ideas, thoughts, constructions, concepts, assumptions, or schemata about such things as how children learn, what "works," how they affect their pupils, what they expect of themselves, what others expect, their roles, duties, and so forth. Perhaps the most useful course of action available to inservice educators may be to focus on helping teachers develop understandings of their work that are more appropriate, more accurate, deeper, and more fully differentiated than they had previously been (see Katz, 1977-b).

The rationale underlying this principle is that the focus on understandings helps the teacher acquire knowledge, ideas, insights, or information he or she can keep and use after the inservice educator has left the scene. Directives, prescriptions, instructions, or even orders might also address the problem the teacher is trying to cope with, but their value is likely to be of short duration. It seems reasonable to assume that modified understandings are more likely than prescriptions and directives to help the teacher to generate new behaviors. To illustrate, one teacher complained that she had been unable to stop one of her kindergartners from persistent hitting of several others in her class. When asked what approaches she had tried so far, she explained that she had already hit the boy as hard as she dared in order to "show him how much hitting hurts." In such a situation, the inservice educator might want simply to prohibit the teacher's hitting by citing a rule or regulation or a philosophical position. However, the teacher's understanding of a kindergartner's ability to abstract from his or her own pain on being hit the importance of not hitting others seems inadequate. In this case, the teacher's understanding of the situation she is trying to cope with could be improved by suggesting to her that when adults hurt children (by hitting them) and provide a model for hurting others, they are unlikely to convince children not to do so as well.

Other aspects of this teacher's understanding of children's responses to censure and her knowledge of alternative ways of handling the disruptive behavior of children might also be addressed by the inservice educator. While a directive might change the teacher's behavior in a particular incident, only modification of understandings is likely to have enduring value or to serve as a basis for action in subsequent similar situations.

Inservice educators often struggle with the question of how directive they should be. They frequently try to relate as "equals" to the teachers they are trying to help. While they are equal in most respects (e.g., they are equally adults, professionals, educators, citizens, etc.), it is taken to be a general principle that the role of any teacher—in this case the inservice educator—is legitimized by the fact that a teacher is someone whose understandings of the phenomenon of interest are better than those of the learner. That is to say, an inservice educator is someone who has more useful, appropriate, accurate, or differentiated understandings than the teacher being helped.

The tacit acknowledgment that such differences exist legitimizes the educator's authority to provide inservice training.

2. Focus on Strengthening Worthwhile Dispositions

Widespread enthusiasm for performance-based teacher education, and for competency-based education in general, seems to be associated with the risk of underemphasizing the development of learners' desirable dispositions. Dispositions, as defined here, include relatively stable "habits of mind" or tendencies to respond to one's experiences or to given situations in certain ways.

In deciding what responses to make to teachers, it is reasonable to choose those that are likely to strengthen enduring dispositions thought to be related to effective teaching. Similarly, responses to teachers should focus on weakening those dispositions that might undermine effective teaching. Some examples of dispositions likely to be related to effective teaching include inventivenesss or resourcefulness, patience (i.e., longer reaction times), friendliness, enthusiasm, etc. Some dispositions likely to undermine effective teaching include tendencies to be impetuous, unfriendly, hypercritical, and so forth.

Two suppositions provide the rationale for this principle. First, as already suggested, it seems obvious that we cannot teach all the knowledge, skills, methods, techniques, etc., that are of potential use to teachers. This being the case, it seems advisable to teach teachers and caregivers in such a way as to strengthen their dispositions to go on learning, to be resourceful, and to be inventive long after the inservice educator's work with them is over. Second, while we indeed want to help teachers with specific skills and methods, it is important to do so without undermining their "self-helpful" dispositions. In short, we should guard against helping a teacher acquire competencies in a way that might strengthen or engender a disposition to be dependent, uninventive, and/or helpless.

3. Focus on Competencies Already Acquired

In our eagerness to be "change agents," we may overlook the possibility that the teachers we work with may already have the competencies appropriate for, or required of, a given situation. Indeed, Gliessman (1984) has suggested that virtually all of the component skills of teaching are within the repertoires

of most people, whether they have anything to do with teaching or not. People know how to listen, explain, give directions, state rules, etc. without professional training. Training is intended to mobilize already available skills into coherent and appropriate patterns for teaching.

Thus, the focus in inservice education should be on helping teachers use already available competencies more reliably, consistently, appropriately, or confidently. For example, a kindergarten teacher might be sufficiently skilled at guiding a discussion with pupils but may vary too greatly in his performance from one occasion to the next. If so, he probably does not require a module on discussion skills, but would perhaps benefit more from a fuller or better understanding of the causes of his own performance fluctuations, or from assistance in becoming more alert to cues that cause him to perform in ways that—as the saying goes—he "knows better" than to do! He might be helped, at least temporarily, by the suggestion that he refrain from leading discussions except when classroom conditions are optimum. In that way, the teacher may be able to consolidate and strengthen mastery of a skill he already has before trying it out under less-than-optimum conditions. Similarly, teachers of young children are often exhorted to "listen" to the children. It is reasonable to assume that all teachers have such listening competencies in their repertoires, although they may employ them inappropriately and/or inconsistently.

In yet another case, a teacher may have the skills required in a given situation but fail to use them with sufficient confidence to be effective. For example, if the teacher's actions betray a lack of confidence when she is setting limits or redirecting or stopping disruptive behavior, children may perceive mixed signals, challenge her, and thus exacerbate the situation, causing her already low confidence to decrease further. In such cases, the inservice educator's role becomes one of "shaping" and/or supporting the teacher's efforts to practice and strengthen already available behavior, rather than focusing on the acquisition of new competencies.

4. Focus on Building Long-term Relationships

This principle refers to those situations in which an observation of a teacher prompts us to offer "corrections." Sometimes, in our eagerness to be helpful and to establish our own credibility, we may offer corrections too hastily. Although in certain

situations it may be appropriate to make corrections, there is often the risk of losing the opportunity to go on helping that teacher over a longer period of time by alienating him or her through premature corrections. The principle of witholding correction is not a matter of the "rightness" of the advice but of allowing enough trust between the inservice educator and the teacher to be developed so that the advice can be seen as an offer of help rather than as a criticism from an outside expert.

5. Focus on Providing Moderate Amounts of Inspiration

Many of the teachers we are trying to help can cope admirably with the complex tasks and responsibilities they face. They may not require new techniques, modules, packages, or gimmicks, although they may believe them necessary, but simply need occasional renewals of courage to enable them to sustain their efforts and to maintain enough enthusiasm to keep working at an unglamorous and perhaps underappreciated job. Excessive sapping of courage or enthusiasm, at times approaching depression (i.e., believing one's efforts have no effects), is a potential cause of ineffectiveness, no matter how many competencies the teacher has. Such ineffectiveness may depress enthusiasm and courage even further, which in turn may again decrease effectiveness, starting a downward spiral. The inservice educator may be able to intervene in the downward spiral by providing moderate inspiration, encouragement, and support.

It seems important that the inspirational message be specifically related to the work setting and its specific characteristics rather than be a generalized message of good will. It is also suggested that supportive and encouraging messages contain real and useful information about the significance of the teacher's efforts. For example, it is likely to be more useful to say something like, "Those new activities really seemed to intrigue the older girls in your class" than to say, "You're doing great." Furthermore, it may be wise to provide inspiration in optimum rather than maximum amounts so that teachers do not become "hooked" or dependent on it, thus undermining their dispositions to be self-helpful in the long run.

GENERAL TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING WITH TEACHERS

The principles outlined above are intended as overall guides or decision-making rules for inservice educators to help select

responses to inservice teaching situations. The general techniques described briefly below are intended to help the inservice educator to further the goals implied by those principles.

1. Maintain an Optimum Distance

Many educators consider closeness, warmth, and supportiveness essential and valuable attributes of their relationships with learners. Research seems to support the contention that warmth, for example, is related to teacher effectiveness. However, inservice educators may be tempted to make the error of being too close to their teachers. An optimum rather than maximum distance is recommended for several reasons. First, excessive closeness may inhibit or limit the teacher educator's ability to evaluate the teacher's progress realistically. Indeed, in such cases the teacher educator may be unable to help the teacher confront serious weaknesses or may fail to perceive the weaknesses at all. Second, if the teacher educator becomes too close to the teacher, he or she may unintentionally impinge on the teacher's right to privacy, a right deserving protection. Third, there is some danger that, if the teacher educator becomes too close to one of the teachers in a group, the tendency to make inadvertently disparaging remarks about another teacher in the group may be great, and credibility and effectiveness may thus be undermined. Fourth, if the relationships between teacher educators and teachers become too close or involved, emotional "burn-out" may occur within a few months (Maslach & Pines, 1977). Not only may excessive personal stress be the result, but effectiveness on the job may also suffer.

2. Cultivate the Habit of Suspending Judgment

There is a strong tendency among those of us who are teachers to pass judgment on what we see in the classroom. We tend to judge not only the rightness or goodness of what we see, but also to judge whether the teacher is doing things "our way" or not. Such assessments seem to come naturally! However, if the intention is to stimulate and support someone's development, then, instead of passing judgment, it may be more to the point to ask oneself some of the following questions: How can I account for what I am observing? Why is the teacher responding to the situation in this way? and, Why is

this happening? In seeking answers to such questions, rather than judging the events observed, we are much more likely to learn those things that will increase our capacity to help the teacher.

Practice in making up answers to the questions and guessing the causes of the phenomena observed can also be helpful. The "guesses" can be inspected for plausibility, and when a reasonably persuasive guess or answer has been formulated, an appropriate method for helping the teacher can be selected and tried.

This technique is recommended for several reasons. First, it includes two features: It can help us resist the temptation to pass judgment and at the same time can encourage us to inspect observations more closely. This in turn can help to slow down our responses to the situation, thereby reducing any tendency to overreact. Second, asking how the observed behavior might be accounted for is likely to lead to learning more about the people we are trying to help and to increase insight into how the teacher defines the situation.

Obviously, there are many reasons why teachers do what they do. Sometimes the teacher's reason for a given action is that it appears to "work," or perhaps a given action is all the teacher knows how to do in a particular situation. Often, teachers take certain actions because they think that the director or the principal wants them to behave this way, even though that may not necessarily be the case. Some teachers do what they do because they think that the parents want them to do it, or the evaluators, or colleagues, or visitors . . . or their own teachers did these particular things, or these things are simply traditional, and so forth. Attempts to account for the observed behavior should help the inservice educator to make more informed decisions about what to do next to help the teacher.

The technique of suspending judgment is related to the more general principle of timing (Katz, 1977-b)—namely, that the longer the latency before a teacher responds to the learner, the more information the teacher has and the more likely he or she is to make better decisions about the next steps. The latency issue seems especially relevant to inservice educators because they often enter classrooms "off the streets," so to speak, without prior information concerning the antecedents of the situation observed. The temptation to pass judgment

rapidly may lead to important errors in assessing teacher needs and competencies.

3. Phrase Suggestions in Experimental Form

Most teaching involves occasions when the most appropriate response to the learner is to make a suggestion. When giving suggestions to teachers, it is helpful to phrase them in the following form: "Next time X comes up, try Y, and see if it helps." Depending on the situation, it might be good to add something such as "X helps some teachers in this kind of situation—but if you find it doesn't seem to help, we can think about something else to try."

This technique is recommended for several reasons. First, it can be expected to strengthen the teacher's disposition to be experimental, inventive, and resourceful. Futhermore, when a suggestion is offered with the implication that it is the solution or the answer to the problem, and if the attempt to use it subsequently fails, the teacher's sense of frustration and defeat may be intensified rather than diminished. Similarly, it is advisable to make suggestions that the individual teacher can be expected to try successfully. If success is not possible, the teacher should at least be able to understand the reasons failure resulted. If suggestions require much greater sophistication than the teacher has, then failure and the intensification of a sense of helplessness or incompetence can only result.

Another reason for recommending this technique is that, when suggestions are made in terms of what to try "next time," the likelihood of humiliating or embarrassing the teacher about the incident just observed is minimized. Some inservice educators are so eager to get teachers to analyze their own "mistakes" following an unsuccessful teaching episode that they might inadvertently embarrass them, which in turn could undermine the teachers' dispositions to go on learning, trying, inventing, and seeking the best methods for themselves.

4. Avoid the Temptation to Stop Pattern Behavior

From time to time we observe teacher behavior that we think should be stopped "cold." While the teacher educator's position may indeed be right, a two-step approach toward such situations may be helpful. First, we can ask in such situations whether the behavior observed really endangers any child. If the answer is a clear "yes," then we must use all the resources

at our disposal to bring the behavior to a halt. If the answer is ambiguous ("maybe" or "no"), then the next step is to help the teacher to try out and practice alternative strategies with which to replace or supplant the old patterns.

If we succeed in stopping a teacher's behavior in advance of sufficient mastery of a new pattern, he or she may be left without alternative methods of coping with the situation. This situation may cause the children's behavior to become worse and increase the teacher's own feelings of frustration and failure. Occasionally, this sequence of events is followed by a type of "backlash" (i.e., a strengthened conviction that the old pattern was really the right one after all).

5. Help the Teacher Make the Job Achievable

From time to time, inservice educators work with teachers who have defined their jobs so that they have to do everything in sight and so that only a superhuman could achieve the objectives. For example, many teachers of young children think their job requires them to "love all the children in their classrooms." It is reasonable to assume that they do not have to love or even like all the children they teach—they do have to respect them all. The latter is not always easy, but is far more achievable than universal love!

The point is that when teachers define their jobs so that the probability or potential for achievement (and therefore satisfaction) is very low, they are likely to experience decreases in responsivity and sensitivity, which decreases effectiveness, which in turn leads to feelings of depression, which further diminishes effort and hence achievement and satisfaction. Thus, a downward spiral seems inevitable (Seligman, 1975).

In such cases, the inservice educator can assist teachers by helping them to clarify their own purposes and to settle on some boundaries for their responsibilities and authority. Successful assistance along these lines should increase the teacher's sense of effectiveness and satisfaction; which in turn should increase responsiveness and sensitivity; which in turn should lead to heightened effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

6. Serve as a Neutralizer of Conflicts

Once in a while, we find ourselves in a situation marked by intra-staff conflicts. In such situations, we are often tempted

to align ourselves with one side or the other. If we give in to that temptation, we may lose our effectiveness in the long run. The technique that seems useful on such occasions is to remind the complaining parties as gracefully as possible of their superordinate (and shared) objectives, to encourage them to keep their minds and energies focused on their long range, common responsiblities. Similarly, it seems useful to resist the temptation to follow up rumors or in any other way to transfer potentially inflammatory information. It is also helpful to avoid reinforcing complaining behavior. One has to sort out and select out which complaints are legitimate and deserve to be followed up and which ones simply reflect the possiblity that complaining is, for some people, the only way they know to get others' attention.

7. Use Demonstrations of Skills Cautiously

Modeling is a useful tool for inservice educators, and opportunities to demonstrate one's skills are often also opportunities to strengthen one's credibility as an educator. But modeling is not without some risks. For example, many inservice educators have had the experience of entering a day care center or preschool class in which (for whatever reason) the situation is out of control. Because we have worked with children for many years, we may know how to bring order to the scene in a flash. In addition, being a relative stranger may increase our power to obtain compliance from young children. But such a demonstration of skill may cause some teachers to look at the scene and say to themselves, "I'll never be that good," or "Why is it so easy for her or him?" and to become even more discouraged and insecure. Or, in the case of demonstrating our skill with older children, the risk occasionally exists that the demonstration will make the teacher look incompetent in the eyes of the pupils. Both of these potentially negative consequences of demonstration must be carefully weighed against the positive value of modeling good practices and enhancing credibility.

8. Share Your Understanding of How a Teacher Sees You

Keep in mind that we do not always know how the teachers we work with perceive us. We know that we are kind and warm, sincere and helpful, generous and giving, and so forth! But we are not always likely to be perceived that way. Some teachers

may be afraid of us or unnerved by our presence, even though we do not see ourselves as threatening in any way. If we sense that these kinds of feelings are generated by our presence, it is helpful to let the teacher know that we understand these feelings; that we have also had experience with similar feelings; and that we realize teachers might look at us with apprehension, suspicion, or even fear. Acknowledging the potential for such perceptions may be a technique by which to diffuse the excessive stress teachers sometimes experience when they are observed. Furthermore, the shared insight might clear the way to selecting more useful and constructive content for the relationship between the teacher and the inservice educator.

9. Resist the Temptation to "Use" Teachers

Some inservice educators are especially intent on getting something accomplished for the children and seem to construe the situation as "getting to the kids through the teachers." If we want to help children (and no doubt we do), then we should do so directly instead of trying to "use" teachers. The focus should be on helping the teachers as persons worthy of our concern and caring in their own right. It is useful to define the role of teacher educator as someone who helps and works with teachers for their own sakes. When we do that wholeheartedly and well, the children will stand to benefit also.

CONCLUSION

In the course of employing the principles and techniques enumerated here, several assumptions might be pointed out. First, it seems useful to assume that not all teachers can be helped by any one teacher educator. Occasionally, an assignment includes a teacher who constitutes a "chronic case" for a given teacher educator. Such a teacher drains large portions of energy, and somehow nothing really seems to help. While this teacher seems to be taking much time and thought, and making no progress, there are other teachers we are responsible for who are waiting to respond to our help and to make developmental advances with relatively modest efforts on our part.

On such occasions, it is a good idea to take the time to think through very deliberately whether or not we see any potential for growth for this teacher under our guidance. We ask ourselves, Do I see any potential for development in this teacher

through my efforts? If the assessment is ultimately a positive one, then we can make a "go" decision and mobilize all the professional resources available for the task at hand. If the assessment is ultimately negative, then we can make a "no-go" decision and try to refer this teacher to other teacher educators, agents, or sources of assistance.

The usefulness of the assumption that none of us can teach everyone equally effectively resides mainly in the apparent effects of scrutinizing one's own thoughts and feelings about the case and making a clear choice or decision. Once the decision has been made, then the energy drained in agonizing over the chronic case seems to become available for work with those teachers who are ready to respond to help. Indeed, the content of a relationship that is chronically unsatisfying becomes focused on the pain and frustrations it engenders instead of on the problems of improving the teacher's effectiveness. Furthermore, it appears that when a "go" decision has been made, we begin to notice some positive attributes of the teacher in question. (Such positive attributes were there before, but we overlooked them by focusing on the chronic aspects of the relationship.) This awareness in turn tends to improve our responses, which in turn seems to lead to more positive responses on our part. Thus, a positive "snowball" can be set into motion by engaging in deliberate scrutiny of our own thinking about the difficult or chronic cases we encounter.

Furthermore, it seems useful always to hold to the assumption that every teacher we work with has an inner life of concerns and dreams and wishes and fantasies and hopes and aspirations and so forth, just like all of us. We do not have to know the content of that life. But if we respect the fact that it is there, we are more likely to treat the teacher with dignity and with respect, an approach not only essential in teaching but also ethically correct.

Another useful assumption is that every teaching decision contains its own potential errors. If, as suggested above, we decide not to correct a teacher for the sake of building a long term relationship, we may make the error of letting the teacher continue to perform incorrectly. If we correct the teacher immediately, we risk the error of undermining a relationship that could stimulate significant long term development and affect a teacher's entire career. Similarly, if we demonstrate to a

teacher our own skills in working with children, we may strengthen our credibility, but we may make the error of causing the teacher to feel ashamed or less confident of his or her own competence. On the other hand, if we pass by opportunities to demonstrate our skills, what we teach may be discounted as coming from an inadequate, high-minded, and impractical or naive source; therefore, our ideas and suggestions may be dismissed out of hand.

Until such time as we can devise approaches and techniques that are error free, we might accept the assumption that every choice or decision contains some errors. We can then think through what those errors might be and select the ones we prefer to make. This assumption should free us to make deliberate choices about the appropriate content of our relationships with the teachers we work with and to proceed with sufficient confidence to help them strengthen their own teaching abilities and self-confidence.

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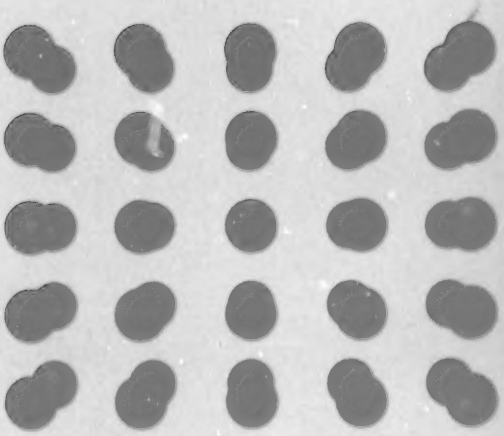

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